O. E. O'Neill.

A SHORT CUT

TO

THE TRUE CHURCH

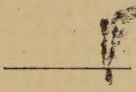
OR

THE FACT AND THE WORD.

BY THE

REV. EDMUND HILL, C. P.

Third Edition, Revised.



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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

A FRESH issue of my book being called for, I take the occasion to acknowledge gratefully the many kind notices of it I have seen: and particularly two of them —one in the *Catholic World*, the other in the *American Catholic Quarterly*.

I have carefully revised the work for this new edition; and, beside correcting sundry typographical errors, have struck out two passages from the chapter on Transubstantiation, adding in their place a note to a paragraph on page 85. I have made this change in deference to the criticism of a learned theologian of my own Order.

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With regard to the expression, "A Short Cut," let me say that I considered it well before deciding on it. Had there been but a question of taste, I should have preferred "A Short Path," or "A Direct Road." But neither of these terms would have conveyed my meaning accurately. I therefore chose the more business-like phrase.

BUENOS AYRES, April, 1891.

PREFACE.

THE idea which forms the principle of this "Short Cut" was suggested by a passage in the "Invitation Heeded," from the pen of the Rev. James Kent Stone, D. D., now Father Fidelis, C. P. The passage will be appropriately quoted presently; therefore, I need not give it here.

Some six years ago, while taking part in a mission at St. John's Church, St. Louis, Missouri, I put the substance of this entire volume into a Sunday evening lecture; and the very kind manner in which Bishop Ryan (now Archbishop of Philadelphia) spoke of my effort encouraged me to write the thing out: or,

rather, to make the intention of writing it,—an intention which, for one cause or another, I have only now put into execution.

VALPARAISO, CHILI, September, 1888

A SHORT CUT

TO THE TRUE CHURCH;

OR,

THE FACT AND THE WORD.

I.—Clearing the Ground.

I write for all who believe with me in the Divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Four Gospels, but are not in the communion of Rome. I was brought up in their ranks, and had any one shown me the "Short Cut" I am about to point out to others it would have saved a circuitous journey.

Of course, I expect the reader to be in earnest—in earnest after truth, for truth's sake. And if it be urged that indifference has nowadays taken possession of so many minds, I answer that *some* there surely are upon whom no

trouble can be wasted; while, again, not a few of those who seem indifferent have simply adopted a peace-policy, or perhaps fallen back upon "personal religion," irrespective of communion or minister.

No doubt, though, there will not be wanting, at the start, some such argument as this to meet me: "You mean by the 'True Church,' the one *you* belong to. Anybody can see for himself a *very* short cut to *her* door. All one has to do is to throw away common sense, give up the Bible and the right of private judgment, shut one's eyes, and—walk straight in."

Now it happens, gentle reader, that these are the very things I am going to ask you to use. I invite you, first, to look at certain *facts*, and from the standpoint of common sense—not of prejudice; then to compare these facts with certain *words* of Scripture; and, lastly, I ask that, in making this comparison, you will use *your own* private judgment—not that of parents, pastors, or masters.

This is precisely my "Short Cut."

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II.—The Fact.

All professing Christians deplore, of course, the "present divided state of Christendom." And some are making efforts for reunion, while others have concluded that to "agree to differ" is the only feasible plan. But neither those who are content to deplore nor those who are anxious to heal these divisions look sufficiently at the *facts* of the case. If they did, their attention would soon be concentrated on the *one* fact I ask my readers to inspect—a very plain fact indeed: that communion or Church which stands forth most prominently as we survey the divisions of Christendom; to-wit, what is known as the Catholic and Roman, or Roman Catholic, Church. They would *face* this fact in a practical way.

If "facts are stubborn things," as the proverb has it, this Church is a particularly stubborn thing. Probably you have called her so before now. It will not do to form theories of Christianity, or plans

for reunion, and leave her out. She is rather too large for that, and figures too much in history. I wish you, then, to look at her purely as a fact. Napoleon discovered the "logic of facts"—somewhat to his own cost; and I think you will find a logic in this fact—but entirely to your profit, as I hope.

You are aware, I presume, that the Roman Catholic Church is a world-wide communion, embracing within her pale about two-thirds of entire Christendom; and uniting around one centre, in the obedience of a common faith, people of every nationality, speech, and temperament. You also know, of course, that she claims to be the original and only Church of Christ — in short, exclusively *the* Church. And further, that, in spite of the numerous corruptions and damnable errors with which she has been charged, she persists in declaring herself infallible.

Let us view this fact, then — this Church with her claims,—from the standpoint of common-sense. Why, you tell me, it is precisely common-sense that has

hitherto prevented you from taking much notice of a Church with such arrogant pretensions and a character so incorrigible. What has proved, you may add, such a bar to the desired reunion of Christendom as this same haughty Church? She looks down contemptuously, you think, upon you and your humble co-religionists, as if she would demand, with swaggering *Pistol:*

"Shall dunghill curs confront with Helicons?"

Here I beg pardon; but you are quite deceived in supposing common-sense to have thus influenced your judgment. It is something else, which you have mistaken for common-sense. For common-sense is a part of reason, and reason is unerring in its proper sphere. Let us see what common-sense really does say.

1.—The Catholic Church claims to be the only Church of Christ—that is, the only true one. Well, of course, this claim cannot make her what she is not, but neither can it *un*make her what she *is*. It is scarcely common-sense, then, to beg the

question and decide at once that she is *not* the only Church because she *claims* to be so. On the contrary, common-sense tells me, and therefore you, that if there is but one true Church, that Church *must know herself to be the one, and must let us know it, too.*

2.—The Catholic Church claims to be infallible—that is, to be divinely guided and guarded in what she believes and in what she teaches; so that she has never been allowed, and never will be, to be deceived herself, or to deceive the world, on any question of faith or morals. For this is what *she* means by "infallibility," whatever you may have understood by it.

Again, then, it is not your common-sense which rejects this claim as preposterous. For mine *insists*—and therefore so must yours, if you give it a fair hearing—that if there *is* a Church of Christ, instituted by Him to teach the world the truth, she *must be* divinely guided and guarded, and cannot be allowed to impose upon us anything false in faith or morals. And the trouble, again, is that you are begging

the question as to whether such a Church exists.

So far, therefore, are these two claims from being absurd in themselves, that they rather create a presumption in favor of the Church which makes them: seeing that, out of so many churches, she alone *dares* to make them. At any rate, if you are puzzled by this daring, and at a loss to account for such a Church, you ought at least, to give her a chance to account for herself—if she can. Surely this is the verdict of common-sense.

III.—The Word.

Now let us look at certain equally plain *words*—the words of Him in whom we both believe, I hope, as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." They are the last three verses of St. Matthew's Gospel, spoken to the Apostles, that little band of men whom the Master had chosen and prepared to form a *Teaching Society*. "Apostle" means one who is *sent*, as I presume you know. St. Matthew uses the term when he gives the list of the

original twelve (chap. x. 2); and their actual *mission*, or sending, is recorded at the conclusion of his Gospel.

We hear our Divine Lord say, in St. John (xx. 21): "As the Father hath *sent* Me, I also *send* you;" and in St. Mark (xvi. 15): "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." In St. Luke (xxiv. 46–9.) He explains to the Apostles that they have been chosen, first to witness to His death and resurrection, and then to "preach penance and remission of sins to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"; and concludes, "I *send* the promise of My Father upon you" [the Holy Ghost]; "but stay you in the city till you be endued with power from on high." But His words of mission recorded by St. Matthew are the fullest and most satisfactory: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe and do all things whatsoever I have commanded

you; and behold I am with you always, even to the consummation of the world."

Now let us make upon this passage of St. Matthew some genuine private-judgment remarks.

First, unless these words have "passed away"—and with them all possibility of belief in Him who uttered them—there ought to be something to show for them at this moment; some visible *fact* in the world *now*. I mean the fact of a Teaching Society, the visible continuance of the one commissioned then. For, evidently, Our Lord *does* commission the apostolic band to teach *all* nations for *all* time. He must, therefore, have done one of two things: either kept *them* alive to this day, or taken care that the Society which began with them should be duly preserved and propagated. Now, the first of these two things He has not done, we know. Will you say, then, that the second was beyond His ability? A miracle? Yea, verily, a perpetual miracle. But does He not preface His mandate by declaring, "*All power* is

given to Me in heaven and on earth''? From any other lips than His, I grant you, the whole affair would have been the wildest nonsense. Well, then, believing in Him as you and I do, we simply cannot do otherwise than look for *a visible continuation at this day* of the Apostolic Society He sent to teach all nations.

Secondly, this Apostolic Society must not only have continued to the present day, but *have taught all nations, and be teaching them now*, so far as the way has been or is open to it. You see this at once, of course.

Thirdly, when the Master says, "Teaching them to observe and do *all* things *whatsoever* I have commanded you," He evidently means that *a definite body of doctrine* shall be taught, and *the same everywhere*. This is obvious on a moment's reflection. For no sane person will contend that Christ, after giving express instructions to the Apostles, left them free to differ as to what His religion was, or to teach one doctrine here, another there.

Fourthly, it is equally clear that Christ's intention was to establish *one* Church for *all* nations, one religion for the whole world. This one Church and religion, then, would be rightly called *Universal*, and we should expect to find them called so.

IV.—The Word and the Fact.

So now we are ready, I think, to compare fact with word.

1.—There *is* a fact in the world now which *does* claim to be the visible continuation of the Teaching Society begun with the Apostles. That fact is the Roman Catholic Church. Has she anything, then, to show for this claim? All Christians who believe in what is called the Apostolical Succession acknowledge that she does hold from the Apostles, and that any other bodies which claim this succession *must trace it up through her;* while those who reject Apostolical Succession admit this Church to have the best pretensions to it, as descended undoubtedly from the days of the Apostles.

2.—Has this Church taught all nations, and is she teaching them now? She has done so, and is doing so, to the utmost of her power. Not a single *nation* (as such) has been converted to Christianity except by missionaries in communion with her. If she lose ground in one part of the world, she replaces it in another.

3.—Does she teach one definite body of doctrine, and the same everywhere? She is notoriously charged with insisting on the acceptance of every article of her faith, while she obstinately refuses to retract "one jot or tittle." And wherever you find her, throughout the world, you find her imposing the same faith.

4.—That she claims to be exclusively *the* Church of *all* nations—that is, to have received the whole world as her field—we have already seen to be one of the chief accusations brought against her. But has she ever had, and has she to this day, a *name* designating her as *the Universal* Church? You are aware, I presume, that "Catholic" means universal? This, then, is the name she has been always

known by—the name she has kept to this day, in spite of all attempts to rob her of it.

I ask you, then, mine honest friend, how comes it that this *fact* of ours corresponds so remarkably with the *words* of Christ? Does it not look as if the word was expressly intended to *create* the fact? Take the word away—suppose it never spoken—and how do you account for the fact?

Your unbiased private judgment can not help agreeing with mine in finding the answer to these questions.

V.—Supplementary.

But perhaps — and very naturally — you, in turn, may ask me how comes it that, if the above comparison is so easy to make, and so striking, any intelligent and earnest believer, who knows both fact and word, can fail to make it?

The trouble is, so many are accustomed to look at passages, whether of Scripture or of Christian history, from the standpoint of prejudice and foregone conclu-

sion, and *not* from that of common-sense. Neither do they use *their own* private judgment (though they may think they do), but a *traditional* interpretation, derived from the private judgment of others. This was the case with myself, I know, while I was a Protestant. Hence sundry theories of the Church of Christ, which it is only fair to notice.

VI.—Sundry Theories.

1.—I once heard it maintained by an Anglican clergyman, and a clever man, that there is no *visible* Church. Nevertheless, he called himself "a thorough churchman." He meant that after the New Testament had been written, it, together with the Old Testament, formed "God's letter to man" (as he said); and that our *probation* largely consisted in rightly understanding this letter — a ministry, however, being necessary for the instruction of those who could not do this for themselves. Very logical, eh? He favored me with this discourse one day because he saw that I was on the

Romeward path, adding that he himself had once been "on the point of going over to Rome"; thus leaving me to think that perhaps he had given up belief in a visible Church from a rather inconvenient discovery as to whither that belief must lead him. Rightly understanding the Bible, forsooth? Did he ever compare his theory with the plain words of Christ?

2.—Then there is the very common notion of what I may call a "*collective* Church." The whole of Christendom, with its divisions and subdivisions, is called "the Church" (for short). It is contended that "the clergy of all denominations" are *sufficiently* carrying on the work of the Apostles, and, together with their flocks, "agree in *essentials*"; whereas, of course, it is precisely about what are *deemed* "essentials," or as to what essentials *are*, that all disputes arise. Does such a Church as this look like the one commissioned to teach all nations with the Master's own authority (for He says, "*I am with you* all days"), and "*all* things whatsoever He had *commanded*"?

3.—Lastly, there is the High-Church theory of Apostolical Succession and "branches." You may remind me that the Roman is not the only Church with Apostolical Succession; that she herself acknowledges its existence in other communions. Then why may not the original Church be represented now—sufficiently, at least, if not quite satisfactorily—by each "branch" that rejoices in Apostolical Succession of orders, and holds the faith of the early "Undivided" Church?

I answer, first, that, of the churches you call "branches," the Roman alone has the note of *Catholicity;* for she has the entire world as her field, while the others are purely *national* churches, being confined to one people, or at least, one empire. Moreover, while these are forced to bear the yoke of the civil governments under which they live, the Roman "branch" is independent of all civil governments, being a perfect "kingdom" in herself. She invites, indeed, the good-will and coöperation of the state, but can well afford to do without them.

Secondly, you need a *trunk* for your "branches." Where is it? The "Undivided Church," did you say? Well, but the moment that church became divided she ceased to be "undivided." It is a split that took place, not the putting forth of branches. Instead of the "three branches" you talk about, it is the trunk split into three pieces. Your metaphor is delusive, and it is passing strange how many minds (like my own formerly) are deceived by it. Three branches, again, without a trunk in common, do not look particularly like "*One* Catholic and Apostolic Church."

No; if you wish to view the Church of Christ as a tree — the tree of life for the healing of the nations—turn to the Mother Church of Rome with the many churches of her communion. *She* is the *trunk* Church, and every church in communion with her is a branch, if you will. Those churches which have the Apostolical Succession of orders but are not now in Rome's communion, *were once* living of her life, and are branches lopped from

the stem. They may be grafted on again; but until they are, the mere possession of valid orders will not make them portions of the one Catholic Church: no, nor yet whatever they have retained of Catholic doctrine or practice.

VII.—To the Reader.

You are now at the door of the True Church, my friend—if only you have eyes to see. And should you at once make up your mind to knock for admittance—in other words, to go to a priest and get instruction—why, so much the better every way. For in hearing a Catholic priest, you will *not* hear private judgment, as you would in listening to an Anglican clergyman, whether High-Church, Low-Church, or Broad-Church, or to any other Protestant minister. The priest cannot ask you to accept his "I think," but must speak in the name of the Catholic Church, and give you the faith he is bound to believe himself — the faith "once delivered to the saints"—the faith which is law, immutable law, for the

Pope no less than for the neophyte. Hearing the priest, you will hear the Church; and hearing the Church, you will hear Christ, who said to those He commissioned to preach: "He that heareth you, heareth Me"; and added—so as to leave us no choice in the matter—"He that despiseth you, despiseth Me." (St. Luke, x. 16.) Whence also St. Paul says (Rom., x. 17) that "Faith cometh by *hearing*, and hearing by *the word of Christ*"—that word ever *living* in His Church. And St. John, in his first Epistle (iv. 6) declares against false teachers: "*We* are of God. He that knoweth God *heareth us;* he that is not of God heareth us not. *Hereby* know we the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error."

Ponder these texts, I beseech you. And if you ask *how* does the "word of Christ" live on in the Church, the explanation is simple. The Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of Christ (as proceeding from both Father and Son), *dwells in* the Church, and *teaches through her*, according to our Saviour's promise (St. John, xvi.

13, 14): "When the Spirit of Truth shall come, He will teach you *all truth*. For He shall not speak of Himself, but shall speak all that He shall *hear*. . . . He shall *receive of mine*, and shall show it unto you."

I say, then, that in hearing a Catholic priest, when he announces to you the faith of the Church he represents, you hear the "word of Christ" himself, who *is bound for* all that the Church teaches.

As to the priest personally, whatever his defects as a man may be, you have no reason to be afraid of him. Of course you no longer believe him (if you once did) to be possessed of horns and hoofs, still you may imagine there is something occult and mysterious about him. You will find yourself, then, very much mistaken. My own experience of Catholic priests has been a long and varied one; and I have found them everywhere, as a class, the most unpretentious, matter-of-fact, common-sense set of men in the world.

But perhaps you are not ready to knock at the Church's door yet. You feel as if

you had been carried through the air over mountains which have always seemed impassable. Let me say that I, too, have seen those mountains, and worked my way around them at great pains—only to behold them "removed" by the gift of "faith," as though they had been so much vapor. Well, to you they are still solid —eh? And you wish to see them tunnelled in "bee-line" style? Then I'll tackle the four which particularly obstructed *me*, and tunnel them for you on the plan of this "Short Cut."

MOUNTAIN NUMBER ONE.

THE first and most formidable of our four mountains is, in brief, the Pope—in longer phrase, the Papacy, or Papal Supremacy, with its pretensions and acts. This, no doubt, you have hitherto regarded as the very "head and front," of Rome's "offending." And, in good sooth, if *not* what we believe it, it *is* the greatest imposture ever heard of. Let us look at it simply as a fact. It cannot be denied that the long line of Pontiffs, with their indestructible See, and all their bearings upon past and present, is the most extraordinary fact in history. No wonder that your "Reformers" resorted to calling the Pope Antichrist and the "Man of Sin." Having rejected his claims to be "from Heaven," they found there was no accounting for him as "of men." So that the very originators of the great Protestant tradition were forced, in spite of

themselves, to bear witness to the more than human character of the Papacy.

But it is enough for you and me to contemplate our fact from the standpoint of common-sense.

I.—The Fact.

First, the Pope is the *centre* of a vast *unity;* and this, because he is its *head.* He is believed by the great majority of Christians to hold supreme authority on earth as "teacher and ruler of the universal Church;" and this, again, because he is "the successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles;" and, further, to be "infallible" (or *divinely secured* from error) in the exercise of his teaching office *ex cathedra*—that is, when speaking from his *chair*, as exponent and judge "in questions of faith and morals."

Now, you have been taught, no doubt, to regard this belief of ours as absurd in the extreme, not to say monstrous. But let us appeal to common-sense, I repeat, before coming to the grounds of this extraordinary persuasion.

1.—Is there anything so very absurd in the Catholic Church, as a human society intended to hold together, having a *centre of unity*, or a *head* for her centre of unity? Why, every form of human society, properly so called, from the family up to the state, has its centre of unity—and that, invariably, a headship of some kind. Even a republic must elect its chief magistrate, and invest him with certain supreme powers. Instead, then, of thinking it absurd for a society like the Catholic Church to have a centre of unity in the shape of a governing power, common-sense would find it passing strange to see such a body hold together *without* a head.

2.—Again, when we consider the Catholic Church as more than a human society —as a society designed to propagate a revealed religion through all nations and all times,—how imperative her need of keeping *one!* A Church that was to spread itself over the world, and contend for many centuries with human passion and opinion played against it by diabolical subtlety,—such a society must surely

have been organized with a view to indestructible unity. Can common-sense doubt that the Founder of this society—if, indeed, the Divine Wisdom in Person—made adequate provision for this unity? And if, as is alleged, He chose a way at once the simplest and the most in accord with human experience,—to-wit, by establishing a central authority which should perpetually devolve upon *one*,—what fault has common-sense to find with this arrangement? Will it venture to suggest a better?

3.—Once more. As to the Pope's "infallibility." Did it mean that his Holiness is not "a fallible mortal," such as yourself and your humble servant, it would indeed be absurd. But it does *not* mean this. Neither does it mean that the Pope is incapable of making mistakes in matters of discipline or of *private* judgment. What it does mean is, as I have said above, that he is divinely secured, or preserved by divine assistance, from error in forming a *public*, *ex cathedra* judgment on questions of faith and morals.

Now, what does common-sense really say to *this* claim of "infallibility?" Why, that the whole question turns on the *right* of the Pope to his *authority*. If that authority be "of divine right"—if the Pope be indeed (what the Catholics call him) the Vicar of Christ, holding direct from *Him* supreme authority as expounder and judge of faith and morals,—why, *then*, says common-sense, *the Master is responsible* for the *ex cathedra* judgments of His Vicar; so that, *of course*, they can never be wrong.

II.—The Word.

To come, then, to the grounds of this belief of ours. The Papacy appeals, and has ever appealed, to certain words of Christ as the very charter of its existence. There are three great texts, which have come to be called "the Petrine texts." Let us set them in a row.

1.—St. Matthew, xvi. 18, 19: "And I say unto thee that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the

keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."

2.—St. Luke, xxii. 31, 32: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you [*plural*], that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for *thee*, that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethen."

3.—St. John, xxi. 15–17: "Simon, son of John (or Jona), lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith: Yea, Lord: Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said to Him: Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed My sheep."

The first of these three texts is undoubtedly the greatest, but the other two are not the less important. Had our Lord spoken only what we find in the first, His words would have been sufficient to create the fact which is historically based upon them. But his second and third utterances—one made on the eve of His Passion, the other after His Resurrection—throw invaluable light upon the meaning of the first.

Let us briefly exercise, as before, the right of private judgment on each passage in its turn.

I.—(*a*) In the first place we note that our Saviour speaks the words, "Thou art Peter," etc., in rejoinder to a declaration of *faith*. "Who do *you* say that I am?" He had asked the twelve collectively. Peter had promptly replied: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Shall we say that this Apostle had merely expressed the common belief of his brethren? It is plain from what immediately follows, that this was *not* the case. "And Jesus answering said to him: Blessed art

thou, Simon Bar-Jona [son of John]; because flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven." Peter, then, had manifested a faith which was *a special gift to him alone*. The Eternal Father had chosen him for this gift. And can we doubt that it was from knowledge of this choice that Christ had promised him the name of Cephas, or Peter, on first seeing him? (St. John, i. 42.)*

(*b*) In the second place, what is meant by the "Rock?" We can see at once what is *not* meant by it. It is not the *man* Peter, *apart from his faith*. For his name is given him *because of* his faith. Neither, again, for the same reason, is it *his faith apart from Peter*. "*Thou* art a Rock," says our Lord. Evidently, then, this Rock is *not* the *abstract* confession of Christ's Divinity; but it *is* the faith

* Cephas [Κηφας] is the Greek form of a Syro-Chaldaic word meaning Rock. Peter, again [Πέτρος], is an adaptation of the feminine *petra* to the name of a man. Be it remembered that our Lord spoke in Syro-Chaldaic, and said: "Thou art *Kepha* and upon this *kepha*."

which made that confession, *concrete* in him who made it (Peter). In other words, it is *Peter holding*, *Peter declaring*, *his divinely given faith*. This, I think, ought to be as clear to you, gentle reader, as it is to me.

(*c*) Thirdly, with regard to the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." You are aware, perhaps, that "the key" (to quote the Anglican Bishop Bloomfield on this passage) "was a badge of high office and distinction in the regal governments of antiquity." Yes; and we are forcibly reminded here of the investiture of Eliakim with the high-priesthood, as foretold by Isaiah (xxii. 22): "And I will give [or place] the *key* of David upon his shoulder; and he shall open, and there shall be no man to shut; and he shall shut, and there shall be no man to open." Moreover, Christ says of Himself, in the Apocalypse (iii. 7) "These things saith the Holy and True, who hath the *key* of David: he who openeth, and no man shutteth; shutteth, and no man openeth."

Is it too much to say, then, that Peter

is promised an office in Christ's kingdom here below *corresponding to the high-priesthood in the Jewish Church?* or, again, that since Christ Himself is "High-Priest over the House of God" (Heb. x. 21), and King on "the throne of David" (St. Luke, i. 32), He here undertakes to raise this favored Apostle to a *vice-regal* share in His own sovereignty?

(*d*) Next, as to "binding and loosing." What can this mean but a *judiciary* power? It refers particularly to remitting and retaining sins (St. John, xx. 23). And, whereas, a little later (St. Matthew, xviii. 18), it is promised to *all* the Apostles collectively, we ask why to Peter first and singly—unless that, while the rest were to be his equals in apostolic power, *he* was to have a *primacy* among them of *jurisdiction* as well as of honor? What other reason can we find? There must have been *some* reason, and a sufficient one.

Obviously, again, the power of binding and loosing is *one* of the things signified by the "keys" —as being analogous to "shutting and opening;" yet Christ does

not promise the *keys* to the other Apostles. Surely, this is because the *first* meaning of the "keys" is, as we have seen, a special authority destined for Peter alone?

(*e*) Lastly, before we pass to consider the other Petrine texts, I wonder if the thought occurs to you that, in accordance with our Lord's *rock* metaphor, St. Peter and his faith *must live on from age to age*, as long as the Church shall live? For, of course, the *foundation* of a house is not withdrawn as soon as the building is finished. On the contrary, it is expressly designed to hold the structure firmly together. The rock, therefore, on which Christ declares He will build His Church, must be something *permanent*—an *abiding* power, and worthy to be called a rock because of its stability.

Now, with this thought in your mind, read the passage "Thou art Peter," etc., again. You will see that the Son of God has no sooner heard the confession of His Divinity, than He stakes His very claims to that Divinity on a promise which He

challenges the powers of darkness to frustrate. This promise is a *prophecy*, and uttered for *all future time* to hear. We may look, then, for the fulfilment of this promise and prophecy in a *fact*—may we not? *must* we not?—and a fact sufficiently prominent in history to be easily identified.

Let us see if the second and third Petrine texts lead us to the same conclusion.

II.—Our Divine Lord says, in the words recorded by St. Luke (xxii. 31, 32), that he has asked for Peter an unfailing faith, in virtue whereof that Apostle is one day* to confirm his brethren.

Here we have Peter's faith again in its quality of *rock*—have we not? But *what* "brethren" are to be "confirmed" by this indefectible faith? His fellow Apostles, do you say? Why, *they* will not

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* "Do thou *one day*, *in turn*, confirm," is the more idiomatic rendering of the Greek σύ ποτε ἐπιστρέψας. But the commonly received translation is more applicable to Peter, because of his fall.

need confirming. No: for the Holy Ghost is to descend upon them all at Pentecost, and render all equally inspired, equally infallible *ex cathedra*, equally endowed with an unfailing faith.

What, then, can the Master mean? There is but one explanation. He beholds His Church—the Church of all time—present in the apostolic band, and addresses the Apostles *in their successors*. Just as He said afterwards: "Go *ye* and teach all nations. . . . I am with *you* to the end of the world."

He is seated with His chosen at the Last Supper. How momentous His words, as St. Luke has preserved them for us (xxii. 29–32)! "I appoint unto you a kingdom," He says, "as My Father hath appointed unto Me: that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

This "kingdom" is, evidently, the Church here on earth; for the eating and drinking at His table means the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice just instituted.

The "twelve tribes of Israel" are the *new* Israel, to be created by the preaching of the Gospel through the world. And *they* (the Apostles) are to reign over this Isarel *in their successors*, the bishops of the Church. *Then*, foreseeing what unremitting efforts the arch-enemy will make to overthrow this kingdom,—especially by heresies of all kinds,—Christ turns to the *one* Apostle upon whose *faith* He has promised to build His Church impregnably, and says: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you [ὑμᾶς, all of you], that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for *thee*, that *thy* faith fail not; and do thou, when once converted, confirm thy brethren."

That is (if it mean anything at all), the faith of Peter is to *live on* in *his* successor, and become the indestructible support of the Teaching Church to the end. Once more, then, we cannot but look for the *fact* corresponding to these efficacious words.

III.—The third text remains to be examined. Let us contemplate the scene

depicted in the last chapter of St. John's Gospel. A miraculous draught of fish has been caught *in Peter's net*, let down from *Peter's ship*. After dining with the seven mentioned by the Evangelist (and *seven* is the more fitting symbol of universality than eleven would have been—Judas having fallen away), our Lord takes occasion to confer on Peter the most solemn of all possible trusts. Instead, however, of alluding to the occupation of fisherman, He chooses that of shepherd—being the Good Shepherd Himself.

Peter has been "converted," and his Master lets the rest see this by exacting from him a triple avowal of a greater love than theirs, in atonement for the triple denial which had so scandalized them all. We need not repeat the words of our text, but two or three brief comments are necessary.

(*a*) It is not by accident that Christ gives in charge both "lambs" and "sheep" to Peter. He never used words carelessly. What, then, does each term signify? The sheep feeds and fosters the lamb;

therefore, it is easy to understand by the "sheep" the pastors of the Church, and by the "lambs" the people committed to their care. Our Lord elsewhere calls false *teachers* "wolves in the clothing of sheep." So that it is nothing strange to hear Him speak of the pastors of His people as themselves sheep. And such they truly are, as equally a part of his flock. The entire *flock* is given to Peter's charge—that is the point.

(*b*) The King James version reads, "Feed My lambs" once and "Feed My sheep" twice. This is according to the "received" Greek text. And it is stronger than the Vulgate reading, because the second word rendered "feed" really means "shepherd" (ποίμαινε) — a well-known equivalent for *govern*. "Rule my *sheep*" is weightier than "Rule my lambs."

(*c*) "Feed" with what? Whith sound doctrine, of course—that is, with the truth of God's word. Here comes in a third time, you perceive, Peter's gift of unfailing faith. For if he, as chief pastor,

is to feed the entire flock,—both teachers and taught,—with divine truth, he must be guaranteed against poisoning them by mistake. Plenty of noxious errors will be sure to allure them under the appearance of "fresh fields and pastures new." It will be his business to warn them off such ground, and nourish them with verities both "new and old."

(*d*) But *what* "sheep"—what pastors—is Peter to feed? *Not* the Apostles, again. *They* are each to receive at Pentecost, and simultaneously with Peter, a perfect knowledge of the divine revelation which all are to preach to the world. So that *these* sheep will not need feeding. We can only conclude as before, therefore, that our Saviour has in view the future of His Church, and intends that Peter, with his unfailing faith, shall live on imperishably from age to age, as the centre of her unity and the bulwark of her orthodoxy.

The fact, then, which realizes this divine intention—is there any, I demand? And where?

III.—The Word and the Fact.

You may think, patient reader, that in my criticism I have let my own private judgment have its way, without leaving scope for yours. I seem to have made these "Petrine" texts promise something which for me was already a fixed fact. If so, it has been unavoidable; for the reason that the fact I have led up to exists as an objective reality independently of any mind's assent or dissent. What I have aimed at showing — a conclusion from which, I consider, you cannot reasonably differ — is that these three "Petrine" texts do point unmistakably to a Petrine *fact* of *some* kind; nay, of a pretty definite kind; inasmuch as Peter's faith is to live on in the Church as a teaching and conservative *authority*, such as needs must have "a local habitation and a name."

I may be allowed, then, to inquire now whether there be any room left for dispute as to what and where this fact, this centre is. Surely not — unless we imitate the

hunted ostrich, and deliberately shut our eyes to that Rome, that *See of Peter*, which holds such a place in the history of Christianity that there is but one answer to the felicitous question, "Take Rome from the earth, and where is Christendom?" *

1. — What other centre of unity can you find for it? What other bulwark of orthodoxy? According to any episcopal or patriarchal, but non-papal, theory of the Church, two things ought to be which are not. On the one hand, all the Apostles (or, at least, twelve of them) should have established each a see for himself, and have had a line of successors in that see divinely preserved unto this day. On the other hand, all these Apostolic Sees should have been kept together in miraculous harmony—each infallible, and therefore incapable of falling into heresy or schism.

What is the *fact* on either hand?

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* Manning — "Grounds of Faith." Four admirable lectures, which I earnestly recommend to my readers.

In the first place, the only Apostle beside St. Peter who became bishop of a particular see was St. James the Less, who had his *cathedra* (Chair) at Jerusalem. All the other Apostles appear to have founded churches and set bishops over them — as St. Paul did at Ephesus and Corinth; but the only sees called "Apostolic" were those of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Rome. Now, of these, the Sees of Antioch and Rome were founded by St. Peter in person, who placed his Chair first at Antioch, for a time, and afterwards, permanently, at Rome; while that of Alexandria was set up by St. Mark, the disciple of St. Peter, and considered on that account founded by St. Peter himself, and so called an Apostolic See. Moreover, the three Sees of Antioch, Alexandria and Rome were the only original "patriarchates" — evidently because of their connection with St. Peter. The See of Jerusalem was raised to a patriarchate by the Council of Nice, because of its being "our Lord's city." That of Constantinople later still, because it was the new City of the Cæsars.

In the second place, the Apostolic Sees of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem became defiled by heresy, and fell away from Catholic unity, whereas the See of Rome never either broached a heresy or suffered one to remain without anathema.

2.—Again, if anything is clear from the history of the early centuries, it is this: that but for the See of Peter, the heresies which successively attacked the Incarnation must have strangled true Christianity. When our Lord promised that the gates of hell should not *prevail* against the Rock of Peter's faith, He implied that they would *strive* their utmost in that direction. Nor less, when He said that He had asked for Peter an unfailing faith wherewith to confirm his brethren, did He mean that the said brethren would emphatically need confirming. What wonder then, if the gates of hell *have* prevailed against the successors of the *other* Apostles and the churches of their government, time and again? What wonder if Rome, the See of Peter, has alone stood rock-like to the waves of heresy foaming in baffled malice at its base?

In all this we have the Fact created by the Word, else the Word is barren and the Fact inexplicable.

And now, by way of a clincher, I shall treat you to the master-passage, alluded to in the preface, from the "Invitation Heeded," Part III., chapter ii, p. 225 (eleventh edition). I have divided it into paragraphs, and the italics are all mine.

"The Primacy of the See of St. Peter is the most prominent fact in the history of Christianity. And it is a fact which is inseparably connected with a distinct prophecy. Moreover, the Primacy is not only professedly grounded upon the prophecy in question, but is actually so grounded. . . . I mean that the *words of Christ* are so substantially the *foundation* of the papal power, that *the latter could never have existed without the former*. No intelligent student will think of denying this. Indeed, without looking into the past at all, it is plain that, were it not for the divine sentences so often quoted, the pontifical claims would be wholly without sanction, and the Papacy would fall to pieces in an hour.

"Such being the case, I affirm that the admission of Christ's divinity compels also the admission that the connection between the prediction and the event is *of divine intention*, and exhibits the most literal illustration of the saying of the Apostle, that the Son of God upholdeth all things by *the word of His power*.

"The fact must be either the fulfillment of the prophecy or its misinterpretation. But the latter supposition is an absurdity. *Facts are never misinterpretations of God's promises.* Men may misinterpret a prophecy in their own minds, but *God never misinterprets Himself in history.* It is no answer to this whatsoever to say that men may be mistaken in supposing that there is any essential relation between the words of our Lord and the fact of the Supremacy; for I have already shown that the association can not be a mere subjective impression, since it is *an objective reality.* It would be, indeed, sufficiently incredible that God should have uttered a promise which *He eternally foresaw would be misunderstood by the great body of Christians*

in all ages; but that God should have so ordered events in the development of His Church as *to make His own words the very proof and corner-stone* of a system which opposes itself to His gracious purposes, and perverts the truth which He has revealed—*this* is inconceivable. Be candid, O my friend! and confess that this argument is unanswerable."

IV.—Supplementary.

Leaving you to digest the above choice morsel, and to make the required confession with the best grace you can, I shall add nothing to the argument itself, lest peradventure I should seem

> "with taper light
> To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish."

But allow me to offer a remark or two which may be of service at this juncture.

1.—You may have seen or heard it stated that no proof exists of St. Peter ever having gone to Rome at all; or, at least, of his having set up his See, or Chair, there. The man who can say or write such a thing must be either very

ignorant or very dishonest. Hear what a really learned Protestant says—Dr. Robertson, Canon of Canterbury, and late Professor of Ecclesiastical History in King's College: "It is not so much a spirit of sound criticism as *a religious prejudice* which had led some Protestants to deny that the Apostle was ever at Rome, where *all ancient testimony* represents him to have suffered, together with St. Paul, in the reign of Nero." ("History of the Church," vol. I., p. 4, ed. 1875.)

Dr. Cave, again—a distinguished name among antiquarians—says: "That Peter was at Rome, *and for some time resided there*, we intrepidly affirm *with the whole multitude of the ancients*." Then producing "witnesses altogether unexceptionable, and of the very highest antiquity," beginning with St. Ignatius, a "disciple of St. Peter, or, at least, his successor in the See of Antioch," he concludes: "After names so venerable, therefore, after monuments of antiquity so many and so illustrious, *who will call in doubt* a matter so clearly and constantly attested."

("Script. Eccles. Hist. Literar. Genevæ," 1720, p. 5.)

And, once more, if you are anything of a High-Churchman, Bishop Pearson and Archbishop Bramhall ought to be enough for you with their witness. The former has demonstrated, in his "Opera Posthuma" (Lond., 1688), that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, and that the Popes are his legitimate successors. The other says: "That St. Peter had a fixed *Chair* at Antioch, and after that *at Rome*, is what no man who giveth any credit to the ancient Fathers and councils and historiographers of the Church can either deny or well doubt of." ("Works," p. 268, ed. Oxon.)

If, on the other hand, you dislike High-Churchism, you must admit the authority of Drs. Cave and Robertson; to which I will add that of Dean Milman, who is honest enough to avow that, "*before the end of the third century*, the lineal descent of Rome's bishops from St. Peter was unhesitatingly claimed and obsequiously admitted by the Christian world." ("Hist.

of Early Christianity," vol. III., p. 370, ed. 1840.)

Now, I have taken these extracts from the appendix of a work called "Cathedra Petri" (*i. e.* the Chair of Peter), by C. F. B. Alnatt, third edition (London: Burns & Oates, 1883). And if you wish to inspect for yourself the testimonies of Fathers and councils to Rome being the See of Peter, get that book (the best compilation of the kind ever published), and read from page 50 to page 70. You will tolerate, I hope, a sample or two, in the briefest possible form.

Hear what the three great African bishops say.

(*a*) St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, in the third century, speaks of Pope Cornelius having been chosen Bishop of Rome "when the place of Fabian [his predecessor]—that is, *the place of Peter*, and the rank of the Sacerdotal Chair—was vacant." And again, of certain heretics, "They dare," he says, "to sail and carry letters from schismatical and profane persons to the *Chair of Peter* and the ruling

Church [*principalem*], whence the unity of the priesthood took its source."

(*b*) St. Optatus, Bishop of Milevis, A.D. 372, writes to the Donatist prelate Parmenian: "You *can not deny that you know* [*negare non potes scire te*] that the Episcopal Chair was first established by Peter in the City of Rome; *in which Chair sat Peter*, the head of all the Apostles."

(*c*) St. Augustin, Bishop of Hippo, A. D. 400, gives as one of his reasons for being a Catholic: "I am held in the communion of the Catholic Church by . . . the succession of prelates *in the very Chair of Peter the Apostle;*" etc. And in his "Psalm against the Donatists": "Number up the bishops even from *the See of Peter itself*, and see who has succeeded to whom in that line of Fathers: *that* is the Rock which the proud gates of hell overcome not."

These specimens of patristic testimony are quite enough to show you what confidence can be placed in such guides as a certain High-Church Anglican who is not ashamed to say, "It is only a *guess* . . .

that St. Peter was ever at Rome at all; it is only a guess that he was ever Bishop of Rome." (!) *

2.—Another thing you have probably been told, and with the most serene assurance, is that not a jot of evidence for Papal Supremacy is to be found among the early Fathers.

"Early" is rather an indefinite term. With some it means ante-Nicene; with others it includes the sixth century. Ante-Nicene means of course, before the first Council of Nice, A. D. 325. To appeal exclusively to this period of the Church does not show any depth of learning. For when we consider the state of the Church during those three centuries of persecu-

* Dr. Littledale in "Plain Reasons;" quoted by Father Ryder in "Catholic Controversy," p. 48, fourth edition (London: Burns & Oates, 1883.) This work of the learned Oratorian is a very masterpiece of controversy; and the author's spirit of forbearance throughout is scarcely less wonderful than his erudition. As to Dr. Littledale, when his "Plain Reasons" appeared, I was not at all surprised by its coarseness—for he never could write like a gentleman—nor yet at its unscrupulousness; but I *had* thought him too shrewd a man to get himself *gibbeted*.

tion, and the "Policy of Reserve" (*Disciplina Arcani*) which had to be maintained, the wonder is that testimony of any kind as to points of doctrine can be gathered from the writings which survive. But those who so confidently tell us there is no ante-Nicene witness for Papal Supremacy contrive to discover in that period evidence enough for doctrines which they *like*—for instance, the Real Presence. So here I shall simply cite against them, for your edification, gentle reader, what the greatest man the Church of England ever produced had to say on this head while still an Anglican, though following up the path which "brightened to perfect day".

John Henry (now Cardinal) Newman, in his "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine" (in my humble opinion, the first essay in our language), speaks to the point in question.

"In truth, scanty as the ante-Nicene notices may be of the Papal Supremacy, they are both *more numerous and more definite* than the adducible testimonies in

favor of the Real Presence." And again: "Faint they may be one by one, but at least we may count seventeen of them; and they are various, and are drawn from many times and countries, and thereby serve to illustrate one another and form a body of proof. Whatever objection may be made to this or that particular fact—and I do not think that any valid ones can be raised,—still, on the whole I consider that a cumulative argument rises from them in favor of the œcumenical and the doctrinal authority of Rome, stronger than any argument which can be drawn from the same period for the doctrine of the Real Presence." (Introduction, pp. 24, 25.)

For those, again, who appeal beyond the third century, our author continues (p. 26): "If it be said that the Real Presence appears, by the liturgies of the fourth or fifth century, to have been the doctrine of the earlier times,—since those very forms probably existed from the first in divine worship,—this is doubtless an important truth; but then, it is true also that

the writers of the fourth and fifth centuries *fearlessly assert*, or *frankly allow* that *the prerogatives of Rome were derived from apostolic times*, and that *because it was the See of St. Peter.*" (Edition of 1881. London: Pickering & Co.)

The question, then, arises, honest reader, How comes it that *some* students of patristic lore can find in these early centuries the evidence *they wish to see*, but not another which is equally to be found there, and greater both in quantity and in force?

Hear another illustrious convert from the ranks of the Anglican clergy—Father Harper, S. J.,—in his "Peace through the Truth" (First Series, p. 43, London: Burns & Oates).

"For ourselves, we will say that of all the enigmas which the license of human thought presents, none is to us more inexplicable than the *resolute rejection* of this dogma [Papal Supremacy] by those who profess submission to the word of God and the universal tradition of the Fathers; because there is no one doctrine, not even excepting the doctrine of the

Trinity or of Transubstantiation, which has such clear proof from Holy Scripture in its favor, and such a mass of testimony in the writings of the Fathers—Greek as well as Latin,—as well as in the history of the Church, from her birth on the first Whitsunday up to the present hour, as the doctrine of the Papal Supremacy."

Well, then, my friend, if you wish to satisfy yourself about this all-important matter of Papal Supremacy, read Allies' "See of Peter" (the best book for an inquirer), or the Hon. Colin Lindsay's thoroughly lawyer-like "Evidence of the Papacy," or Alnatt's "Cathedra Petri" (above mentioned), or Wilberforce's "Principles of Church Authority," or Stone's "Invitation Heeded" — any of these,—and you will probably experience both the astonishment and the indignation which seized me when I made bold to tackle the first on the list. My astonishment was caused by the *overwhelming* proof of the Primacy of St. Peter's See, and the necessity of communion with it; my indignation, by the discovery of having

been deceived by the men in whose statements I had confided,—men whom I will not accuse of bad faith, but who can not, it seems to me, be guiltless before God as "blind leaders of the blind."

3.—Now, to close this long chapter—the length whereof will be excused, I hope, by the importance of its subject,—I have one little observation of my own to make, which may not be unworthy of your notice.

Those who "profess and call themselves Christians," yet protest against the claims of the See of Peter, are rejecting one of the most cogent arguments for the Divinity of Christ.

What was Rome at the time of our Lord's birth? Not only the centre of the civilized world, but the capital of that arch-enemy whom the God-man came to destroy, and whom He Himself called the "Prince of this world." If, then, having vanquished His foe, the "Captain of our salvation" sent His chief lieutenant, after the manner of conquerors, to take the capital of the enemy's kingdom and make it the capital of His own, was not this a

master-stroke of divine policy? For, certainly, if it was His aim to establish a *visible* kingdom of God on earth, what centre was so fit for it as Rome? At the same time what more unattainable to any but divine power?

Again, it is sometimes asked why the Incarnation was so long delayed—why the Saviour of the world appeared so late. Without trespassing upon what is inscrutable, we can see that the Divine Wisdom glorified itself by allowing its very enemies to prepare the way for the Incarnation. Those enemies (the fallen angels) had followed up their victory over Adam so successfully that they seemed at last to have subjugated the nations beyond hope of redemption. They had also gone on "hatching vain empires," one after another, each more formidable than its predecessor, until they had erected in that of Rome what appeared an insuperable barrier against any possible kingdom of God on earth. But, behold, it was just at the culmination of the Roman sway that the promised Deliverer was born! And when,

by seeming defeat, He had completely outwitted the devil, He found in the spoils of the Roman civilization the very materials to hand which would best consolidate His kingdom—especially Rome herself, with her majestic language and her genius of organization.

Now, in thus overruling the malice of His enemies, He proved Himself *their* Master and the world's true Lord. But deny that He made Rome the capital of His kingdom—maintain that the Pope is not His Vicar, but a usurper,—and you throw away one of the strongest proofs for the Divinity of Christ, to say nothing of the argument you create against it.

MOUNTAIN NUMBER TWO.

Let it be Transubstantiation, the term which Catholic theology has coined to define the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. No doctrine has been more violently assailed by the adherents of the Reformation. It has been denounced as idolatrous, on the one hand; on the other, as absurd, because contradicting both reason and the evidence of the senses; while men like Macaulay, quite free from sectarian bias, have imagined it the greatest of trials to the faith of an intelligent Catholic.

Deferring for the present our comment upon some of the objections to this doctrine, we will briefly consider the *belief* in it, dealing first with the *fact* of the belief, and then with what it is based upon.

I.—The Fact.

That this belief is a fact, no one can deny—a fact too of very large dimensions. Let common-sense put a question or two.

1.—Are Catholics the only people holding this belief? By no means. The separated churches of Russia, Greece, etc., which style themselves "Orthodox," hold it equally, and so do those other Eastern churches which both Catholics and Orthodox declare heretical on the article of the Incarnation. Yes, and of late years, a goodly number of Anglicans, both in England and in America, have come to acknowledge a Real Presence of some kind.

2.—When did this belief originate? Certainly before the fifth century; for those heretical churches just mentioned were cut off from Catholic unity in that century; and, as they have never borrowed doctrine since, from either Greeks or Latins, they must have taken this particular belief with them at separation. Moreover, there is abundant proof from the Fathers of the fourth century, that it was the faith of the Church in their day.

3.—But may it not have been gradually introduced between the first century and the fourth? No, for two reasons. First, because if not a part of the apostolic

"deposit," it would have been a monstrous corruption and a heresy of the first magnitude. Now, we know all the heresies of the early centuries, with the names of their authors and something of their history. Each heresy, as it arose, was quickly compelled to step out from the ranks of the Church, and take its place over against her. It was, therefore, impossible for such an innovation upon apostolic doctrine as this belief would have been to creep in and gain general acceptance among Catholics during the first three centuries. Secondly, because we find *sufficient* evidence that it was a Catholic doctrine in the second century and before the close of the first—as will be seen from the following passage of St. Ignatius, the earliest of the great Fathers, and, if not the disciple of St. Peter, at any rate that Apostle's first successor in the See of Antioch. Writing to the Church at Smyrna, he says of the Docetæ, a set of heretics who denied the reality of *corporeal substance:* "They hold aloof from [ἀπέχονται] Eucharist and prayer, because

they do not confess that the Eucharist is *the Flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ which suffered* [τὴν παθοῦσαν] *for our sins, and which God graciously raised to life again.*" (Epistle to the Smyrnæans, chap. vii.) St. Ignatius suffered martyrdom at Rome, A. D. 107. He, therefore, witnesses for the first century as well as for the second. And, manifestly, his argument against the Docetæ would have had no point whatever had it not been the Catholic faith of his day that the Eucharist *is* "the Flesh of Christ which suffered," etc. Had it been regarded as nothing more than the *figure* of that Flesh, why should these heretics have kept away from it?

II.—The Word.

Now for the only assignable origin of this extraordinary belief—the Word on which, as a fact, it has been based all along. Whether rightly or wrongly, it *is* based unquestionably upon certain words of Christ. The words are in brief: "This is My Body," spoken over bread; and "This is My Blood," spoken over wine.

St. Matthew records them, with their context, chap. xxvi. vv. 26–28; St. Mark, chap. xiv. vv. 22–24; St. Luke, chap. xxii. vv. 19, 20. And St. Paul (I. Cor., xi. 23–26) gives the fullest and most accurate account.

We shall refer to these several passages again. For the present it is enough to state the words as, "This is My Body," "This is My Blood." And now let private judgment have its say a while.

1.—Private judgment, in the name of traditional Protestantism, has had its say for three centuries. It has maintained that the words in question mean, "This *represents* My Body," or "My Blood". And I beg to acknowledge most cordially the extreme *naturalness* of such an interpretation. It is certainly anything but *super*natural. It does away with all mystery, and makes the act of Christ a very simple affair indeed. It was a custom with the Jews (so the learned tell us —see, for instance, Archbishop Kenrick's note on St. Matt. xxvi. 27), for the one who presided at the Paschal supper and

sacrifice to bless and break a loaf of bread, and distribute it to all who had partaken of the lamb; and then, giving thanks over a bowl of wine, to hand that round in turn. How suitable, then, was it (says traditional private judgment) for our Saviour, with His mind full of the morrow, to institute a simple commemorative rite, by bidding His disciples think, whenever they should break bread and drink wine together, of His Body broken on the Cross for them, and His Blood shed for their salvation! What more simple? How easy of performance.

Remarkably simple and easy, my dear P. J. *Only*, if this be all, why retain the Popish name of "sacrament" for such a rite? What is there sacramental about it?

2.—But now let us hear private judgment in the name of common-sense. *It*, in turn, has a question to ask. It wants to know how—the above interpretation of Christ's words being so natural and simple—the other, which takes them literally, ever got a footing; or, at least, how it became a creed. It might, perhaps, orig-

inate as a pure imagination either in apostolic times or at any succeeding period. This is quite conceivable. But how could an *imagination*, whether of genius or of lunacy, create the stupendous *fact* which meets us in history as the doctrine of Transubstantiation? Not only does Protestantism bear witness to the repugnance of the natural mind to such a belief, but the Catholic Church herself frankly acknowledges that the dogma is a *mystery*—a matter of *faith*—and as much above the province of reason as beyond the reach of the senses. Surely, then, this very belief is as great a mystery, in its way, as the doctrine it upholds.

Still, suggests some one of "happy thought," we may account for it (may we not?) by supposing that the Apostles, very soon after their Master had left for heaven, came to imagine that, instead of instituting a mere commemorative rite, He really wrought a great miracle, and changed the bread and wine into His Body and Blood. And again, that having once persuaded themselves of this, they

reached the further conclusion that He had given *them* the same miraculous power. This supposition will sufficiently explain the belief in a Real Presence which we find in St. Ignatius' day—will it not?

Very plausible, replies common-sense. *Only* such a supposition presents two small difficulties to our faith in Christianity, which we shall do well to consider.

(*a*) We believe the Holy Ghost to have been sent upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and *before* they went forth to teach the world, for the express purpose of "guiding them into all truth"—and therefore, of course, preserving them from error as to matters of doctrine. But the above ingenious supposition is incompatible with this belief.

(*b*) Our Lord Himself, if indeed the Divine Person we believe him, must have foreseen how his words would come to be taken or mistaken; and, therefore, could not fail to guard His Apostles against such a delusion as we have been supposing.

We must, therefore, discover some more satisfactory explanation of the origin of Transubstantiation as a doctrine, or else abandon all hope of accounting for the inexorable fact of it.

3.—Don't despair, patient reader. The solution is at hand. Thanks to God's wisdom, which is never at fault, the fourth Gospel has preserved to us a certain discourse from the lips of our Lord and Saviour which throws all the light we need upon the meaning of the words "This is My Body," "This is My Blood." Let us, then, take a good look at this invaluable discourse. We find it recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John, particularly verses 48–59. It follows close upon the feeding of the five thousand—the next day indeed; and is addressed to those who had either witnessed that great miracle, or whose ears have been ringing with the talk about it.

(*a*) After speaking of Himself as "the true Bread from heaven" (v. 32), and "the Bread of life" (v. 48), and saying that to "eat this Bread" is to "live for-

ever" (v. 52)—all phrases which could well be understood of His *doctrine*,—He suddenly adds (in the same verse 52): "And the Bread which I will give is My *Flesh*, for the life of the world." This naturally startled His hearers. Accordingly, we read in the next verse (53): "The Jews, therefore, disputed among themselves, saying, How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?" That is, they understood Him literally of the body they saw before them.

(*b*) How did He continue? Did He upbraid them for grossness in thinking He could possibly mean His real Flesh? On the contrary, He repeats what He had said, and this in the most emphatic way; adding, too, that He would give them His Blood to drink as well as His Flesh to eat. "Verily, verily, I say to you; unless ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye shall not have life in you. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My Flesh *is meat indeed* and My Blood *is drink in-*

deed" (vv. 54–56). Now, genuine private judgment, or common-sense, must needs acknowledge here that our Lord's words *could not but confirm* His hearers in the *literalness* of their understanding. They had, indeed, mistaken His meaning, but not in point of literalness.

(*c*) Their mistake lay in supposing Him to speak of *dead* flesh, to be given for food, as that of animals is given—a mistake both hasty and stupid. Our Lord required absolute submission to His authority, on the strength of His miracles, at all times, and especially on this occasion. And those who now refused this submission were inexcusable. However mysterious the import of His words, those who had witnessed such a proof that "God was with Him," as the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, were bound to listen reverently and wait for the explanation. If He could feed a crowd of five thousand and upwards by multiplying five barley loaves and two fishes till everyone's hunger was satisfied, must he not have known what He was talking about

when He spoke of giving His own Flesh for the life of the world, and declared so emphatically that His Flesh and Blood were meat and drink indeed? Could they reasonably suppose Him to have suddenly gone mad? If not, should they not have taken it for certain that He was broaching some truth which it concerned them to know and accept? Yes; and had they not let pride blind them, they would have seen clearly enough, from the words with which He finished the discourse, that He meant His *living* Flesh and Blood, which were to be given them to eat and drink in some *altogether supernatural* way, and for the end of a *living union* with Himself.

(*d*) For He continues (vv. 57–59): "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood *abideth in Me and I in him*. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same shall *live by Me*. *This* is the Bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers ate the manna and died. He that eateth this Bread shall live forever." Again, to those of His disciples who mur-

mured among themselves, "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" He replies: "Doth this scandalize you? If, then, ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" (vv. 62, 63). His body was to ascend into heaven, and *still* be given as food for the life of the world! and he concludes: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and life." That is: "My Body, as mere flesh, and apart from the life-giving Spirit who formed it, and dwells in it would profit nothing as food. What I promise to give is a spiritual sustenance to nourish the life of the soul."

(*e*) Here, I say, was sufficient explanation for the faith which was ready to submit itself to His authority. He knew that some even of His disciples believed not (v. 65). Accordingly, after this discourse, "many" of them "went back and walked no more with Him" (v. 67). But Peter, on whose faith He was to build His Church, spoke for the twelve as all true Catholics speak now: "Lord, to whom

shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (v. 69).

Now, two things are clear enough, dear reader, from the above striking passage of St. John. First, that had Christ been speaking *figuratively* about His Body and Blood, and meant no more by the eating and drinking than belief in His doctrine, He could never, as being justice itself, have allowed even His enemies to misunderstand Him so grossly, much less have suffered His disciples to go away from Him. For nothing would have been easier than to set his hearers right; nor, in sooth, could they have been to blame for not understanding language so very forced and far-fetched.

But, secondly — and it is to this I would call your special attention,—the Apostles were *prepared* by this discourse to take *literally* their Master's words at the Last Supper. You will surely admit this at once; for must they not have been reminded instantly, on hearing "Take, eat; this is My Body," etc., of the great discourse which had so perplexed them?

Could they fail to recognize the fulfillment of their Lord's extraordinary promise of giving them His Body to eat and His Blood to drink? And if they *did* understand Him literally, *had He not made Himself responsible for that understanding?*

III.—The Word and the Fact.

Our second mountain has been tunneled, you see, as easily as the first: the bee-line made in the same simple way. Taking the doctrine of Transubstantiation (both taught and believed) as a fact in history, we find it based upon certain words of One whom we acknowledge to be God in human nature. It is, therefore, as a matter of course, either the true interpretation of those words or the false. But if it be the latter, He who uttered the words is responsible for it. Therefore it cannot be a false interpretation.

Moreover, from the very repugnance of the human mind to accept anything which transcends both reason and sense, it is plain that our faith itself is a creation and a gift. Had He who said, "This is My

Body," etc., not been God, He could never have made us believe that His words—capable as they are of such a natural interpretation as that which Protestants have put upon them—had the supernatural effect of changing the bread and wine into His Body and Blood. Wherefore I contend that here again—in the *fact* of the belief in Transubstantiation—we have a magnificent proof of Christ's Divinity.

IV.—Supplementary.

But now for two or three difficulties which may still remain in the reader's mind.

1. Does it not appear, from St. Matthew (xxvi. 29), and St. Mark (xiv. 25), that our Lord called the consecrated cup still "this fruit of the vine"? Yes, it would appear so from the way in which these two Evangelists put it. But St. Luke, who is more accurate as an historian, shows us (chap. xxii. vv. 17, 18) that the words "this fruit of the vine" were spoken of the *bowl* of wine passed round *before the end* of the supper; and, again (in vv. 19,

20), that the institution of the Eucharistic mystery took place *after* the supper, as St. Paul also gives it (I. Cor., xi. 23–25). As to why the first two Evangelists are less clear on this point, it may well be that they had more of an eye to the necessary "policy of reserve" in their account of this institution,—of which reserve we have an instance in connection with the passage of St. Paul just referred to.

2. Let us bring this instance up, then, as difficulty number two. The Apostle rebukes the Corinthians (v. 20) for disorderly conduct at what he calls "the Lord's Supper." Hence, you may argue that the Christians of his time knew of no Eucharist other than a commemorative "Supper." But, the fact is, St. Paul, in accordance with the "discipline of the secret" or "policy of reserve," uses the term "Lord's Supper" in order to conceal the Eucharistic mystery from the uninitiated; that term ("the Lord's Supper") being applied to the *Agape*, or "charity-feast," which at that time accompanied the celebration of the Eucharist. In the third

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century this "Agape" was set aside till the evening; and in the fourth century, abolished altogether, by reason of the abuses to which it had given rise, and which began, as we see, even in St. Paul's time. The Apostle, therefore, attacks these abuses, reminding his hearers of the true purpose for which they came together, and of the peril to their souls that resulted from receiving the Communion in a state of sin. And, obviously, what he says for the *initiated* would have no force at all, did he not teach a Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. For how could they become "guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord" by "eating or drinking" mere bread or wine "unworthily"? How eat and drink "judgment" to themselves by "not discerning the Lord's Body," if all the while there was no Body there to discern? Genuine private judgment can form but one conclusion here.

3. "But Transubstantiation is so *very* hard to believe," you say. "It positively contradicts the evidence of the senses."

(*a*) It ought not to present so much difficulty to the faith which believes in trans*naturation*, recorded in both Testaments. For, of course, you admit that Moses, at God's command, changed water into blood (Exod., vii.), and not merely in appearance; for the fish in the river died, and the Egyptians could not drink. While, again, our Lord's first miracle, when, at the marriage-feast,

"The conscious water saw its God and blush'd,"

was a striking type of the Eucharistic change of wine itself into blood—so, at least, we Catholics say.

Now, if you really believe (as I presume you do) in the trans*naturation* effected in these miracles, why is it so much more difficult to accept trans*substantiation?* In the former case a complete change is wrought both of substance, accidents,* and natural properties; in the latter, sub-

* "Accidents" is the term philosophy uses for the outward appearances of a material object, such as shape, size, etc., which are obviously *accidental;* also, therefore, for the color, taste, smell, etc., whereby an object comes under the senses.

stance alone is changed, the accidents and natural properties remaining as before.

(*b*) Then, as to the alleged contradiction to the senses, the very reverse is the truth. For what do our senses come in contact with? Only with the outward forms, or "accidents," of things. We can no more see a *substance*, philosophically speaking, than we can see a spirit. Burn a piece of wood, for instance: a change of accidents or appearances takes place, but is the substance destroyed? No, says philosophy; no, says science. Both authorities maintain substance to be indestructible—except, of course, to the creative power, which, having produced it from nothingness, can cause it to return to its original.

So, then, in the case of Transubstantiation, our senses rest upon the *un*changed accidents or appearances of the consecrated bread and wine, and not upon the substance behind them. They, therefore, tell us correctly as to what they come in contact with.

I hope you won't say in reply that it is

all sophistry to distinguish between substance and accident; for this would betray a contempt on your part for both philosophy and science.

4. The next difficulty which deserves consideration is, no doubt, the most radical of all. It concerns the *how* of the Real Presence. I*n what mode* are the Flesh and Blood of Christ substantially present under the accidents? I know what my own crude notion on this subject was, and that even after I had come to hold a Real Presence of some kind myself, the vague, hazy idea of it advocated by the late Dr. Pusey. I supposed that a cubic inch, say, of bread would become after consecration a cubic inch of the Flesh of Christ; and a cubic inch of wine be changed into an equal quantity of His Blood; consequently, that He multiplied the substance of His Body and Blood as He had multiplied the loaves and fishes.

Now, no idea of the Catholic doctrine could be wider of the mark than this. For:—

(*a*) In the first place, the material sub-

stance of Christ's Body is present under the accidents of bread, *not* quantity for quantity, but *in its unextended essence*, and "after the manner of *spirit*"; present as God is present in the universe, or as the soul is present in the body —"whole in the whole, and whole in every part." So with the presence of the sacred Blood under the accidents of wine.*

(*b*) Secondly, the Body and Blood are *both* present under *either* form. Where one is, there is the other, by "concomitance" or inseparableness. Whence the sufficiency (as the Church teaches) of receiving Communion "under one kind."

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* The doctrine of St. Thomas is that God miraculously takes away *extension* from the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist; thus causing their substance to be present under the accidents as "a force akin to spirit." This theory has, of course, been ridiculed; but who knows enough about matter to refute it? Leibnitz, the greatest of Protestant philosophers, maintains that *all* matter is *essentially* "unextended"—its simple elements consisting of "force akin to spirit": in virtue of which theory he accepts and defends the Catholic dogma of the Real Presence.

For a masterly treatise on the philosophy of the Real Presence, see a work called "The Holy Communion", by the late eminent oratorian, Father Dalgairns. Read chapters I. and II.

(*c*) Thirdly, the Soul of Christ is present, by concomitance, with His Body and Blood; and so too His Divine Person. That is to say, the Sacred Humanity of the Word Incarnate, as reigning at the right hand of God in heaven, is entirely present under the accidents of either consecrated element.

(*d*) Fourthly, our Lord is *not circumscribed* in His Eucharistic presence. He does not leave heaven to become present on the altar, but His Sacred Humanity is *at once* present in heaven and on earth *without division*.

(*e*) Lastly, He does not multiply His substance in proportion to the number of consecrated "Hosts"; but, while He is *entirely* present under every Host in the world, there is *no more* of Him under a million than under one.

It is plain, then, from the above points of doctrine, that the *mode* of the Real Presence, as held by the Catholic Church, is altogether supernatural, supersensible, and superintelligible. He who operates it knows the *how* of it, and that is enough

for our faith. And you will acknowledge, I think, that the *repugnance* caused by the ordinary Protestant notion of the doctrine vanishes upon proper explanation.

5.—But now for the *why* of the Real Presence. This is by far the most important question an intelligent objector can ask. We cannot tell the *how* of our own existence, but the *why* is a very different matter—that is, for believers in Christianity.

Well, Protestantism itself furnishes the answer we want. For it rejected Transubstantiation in consequence of abolishing the Mass — an institution incompatible with its doctrine of the Atonement. Having done away with the Eucharist as a *sacrifice*, it found that *the* reason for holding a Real Presence there at all was gone. So, again when the "Oxford movement" revived among Anglicans the belief in a Real Presence, the *sacrificial* idea kept pace with the sacramental.

Now, sacrifice is the highest kind of worship — a kind which is due to God alone, as acknowledging Him the Master

of life and death, and the primal source of all good to His creatures. Wherefore we find it ordained by Himself at the beginning of human history; and again, specially legislated for in the religion of the Chosen People. Could it, then, cease with the birth of Christianity? What! the highest worship have no place in the most perfect religion? Assuredly there must have been a sacrifice of some kind designated for the Christian Church: and, of course, a befitting one.

"But," you tell me, "after the supreme Sacrifice of Calvary, what other *could* be befitting? The bloody sacrifices of the Old Dispensation had only prefigured that of the Cross; and when that had once been offered—"

Precisely, my dear friend. But what if the Divine Wisdom contrived a way of *perpetuating* the sacrifice of the Cross in an *un*bloody manner? The Catholic Church teaches that our Redeemer instituted, on the very eve of His Passion, a Sacrifice which should at once *commemorate* that of the Cross and *perpetuate* it *in*

a Eucharistic form, as a daily thanksgiving for the benefits thereof, and a continual application of them to the souls of men; and that He left this "unbloody" Sacrifice to His Church, to form the great *central act of her worship* for all time, replacing the many sacrifices of the Old Law.

You are thinking, perhaps, that if this be so we ought to find some prediction of it among the Prophets. Why, we do! Turn to Malachi (i. 11), and read what God says, after rejecting (by anticipation) the sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood in the preceding verse. "For from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, My name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered unto My name *a clean oblation*." The King James version reads "incense" for "sacrifice"; but incense was the accompaniment of sacrifice; and evidently the "clean oblation" means a sacrifice, else why is it contrasted with the offerings of the Old Law? The Catholic Church, then, sees this prophecy fulfilled in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Again, why is it said of Christ, by the Psalmist, "The Lord swore, and will not repent: Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedech"? Perhaps you have been taught to gather from the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter vii, that because Melchisedech was a type of Christ in being "King of righteousness" and "King of peace" (v. 2), and again as introduced into the sacred history without mention of mortal origin or end (v. 3), therefore *this* is all that is meant by our Lord being called "a priest after the order of Melchisedech"? But genuine private judgment will not shirk the question what is a "priest," and what is meant by a priest's "order."

Now, we read in the next chapter of this same Epistle that "every priest is appointed to offer gifts and *sacrifices;* for which it is necessary also that he *have something to offer*" (v. 3). From this it is plain that a priest is *essentially* one who offers sacrifice, and that one who is a priest "forever" must offer a *continual* sacrifice. Again, St. Paul shows what is

meant by a priest's "order," by contrasting "the order of Melchisedech" with "the order of Aaron" (chap. vii. v. 11). "Order" is identical with *rite*. The *kind* of sacrifice a priest offers is that which constitutes his rite or order. Whence the further question remains: What did Melchisedech offer in sacrifice? For if Christ be "a priest after the order of Melchisedech," He must offer according to the same *rite*.

Once more, then, we learn from Genesis (xiv. 18) that Melchisedech sacrificed in *bread and wine*. Here, again, you have been given to understand, perhaps, that he "brought forth bread and wine" merely to refresh Abraham. But genuine private judgment asks: Why, then, is it added, "*for* he was a priest of the Most High God"? What had his being a priest to do with his treating Abraham to bread and wine? But if he "brought forth bread and wine" to offer with them, according to his rite, a thanksgiving sacrifice for Abraham's victory, *then* we see why his priesthood is mentioned, and why Abra-

ham gave him tithes, and received his blessing. St. Paul sees deeper than this. He beholds the Levitical priesthood, then "in the loins of Abraham," paying tribute to the higher priesthood of Christ, prefigured in Melchisedech. And if *he* says nothing of the bread and wine, it is because he is writing to Hebrew Christians, who knew perfectly well both the sacrifice of Melchisedech and that of the Christian altar.

How striking, then, is the fulfillment of David's prophecy, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedech"! Our Divine Lord offers "forever"—for all time,—and "after the order of Melchisedech," the same Body and Blood which, "after the order of Aaron," He immolated but once, "once for all" upon the Cross. His Body and Blood are no longer separated in death, but their *once* separation is mystically shown by the separate consecration of the bread and the wine. Having once for all offered the bloody sacrifice of Aaron, He now offers continually the unbloody sacrifice, the Eucharistic rite, of Melchisedech.

And how does He offer it "forever," for all time? He instituted it on the eve of His Passion, and we do not read of His offering it again: how, then, does He exercise His priesthood continually? The answer is simple. When He instituted the Eucharist, He ordained the Apostles priests, by empowering them to do what He did, in the words, "*Do this* for the commemoration of Me." He thus made them partakers of His own priesthood. And this participation passes on to every priest validly ordained; for there is but one Christian priesthood, that of Christ. *He*, therefore, offers Himself continually on the altar by the ministry of His priests here on earth, who all consecrate with *His* words and act in *His* person; while in heaven He is "forever" presenting to the Father the "clean oblation" of the Mass as daily made throughout the world.

And once more. It was the law of sacrifice from the beginning that it should be *eaten of* as well as offered; and this in order that the offerer might identify himself with his offering—making himself

one thing with it. Wherefore the Eucharist is not only offered but partaken of both by priest and people. Which partaking is called the *Communion*. So that Holy Communion in the Catholic Church is not merely the reception of a sacrament, but an *actual union with* a sacrifice. Not only is our spiritual life nourished by the closest possible *oneness* with Him of whose "Mystical Body" we are members; but, while we are thus sacramentally made one Body and Blood and Soul with Him, He offers us with Himself in the Mass to God.

With regard, then, to the *why* of Transubstantiation, you perceive that, were there no Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, neither could the Christian Church offer to God the most perfect of possible sacrifices; nor could individual Christians offer themselves to him, in and with His Son Jesus Christ, in the most perfect manner possible.

So that to reject Transubstantiation is to deprive Almighty God of the highest worship He can receive from His creatures

through His Incarnate Son. Yes, and it also deprives our Lord Himself of a part of His kingship here on earth. For the Catholic Church is the Kingdom of the Incarnation whether in heaven or on earth. It is, therefore, meet that the Sacred Humanity, while reigning glorified above, should also reign on earth, though veiled from mortal sight. This reign is accomplished by the Abiding Presence on the altars of the Church Militant. The altar is the throne of the King; the sanctuary His court. Whence the ritual and ceremony which seem so unmeaning to those who have only the "real absence" in their churches. And the King proves His sovereignty over mind and over matter: over mind, by the homage of that faith which is itself (as I have said) a perpetual miracle; over matter, by the sister miracle of Transubstantiation, and by elevating the material creation to the dignity of divine service.

Let me conclude these supplementary remarks with a brief comment on Macaulay's notion that intelligent Catholics find

Transubstantiation a severe trial to their faith. The fact is, there is not a doctrine of our religion which gives the Catholic thinker *less* difficulty. And this is not only because he accepts it by the grace of divine faith and on infallible authority; nor, again, because it is put before him with such perfect accuracy of statement; but chiefly because the Real Presence in the Eucharist is simply a development of the Incarnation—its "complement," as we say.

You, my friend, believe in the Divinity of Christ, but do you grasp the meaning of the Incarnation? Do you *realize* it as a fact? Go back with me to the Manger at Bethlehem, and contemplate the Infant lying on the straw. Do you *really* believe that helpless Babe in swaddling clothes to be *personally* the Almighty God — the Eternal born in time — the Infinite just issued forth from a nine-months' imprisonment in the womb? Then come to the Catholic altar, and let us look into the "tabernacle," and see the blessed sacrament reposing there. I ask you: If the

Incomprehensible God could take the form of a human babe, what is it but going a step further if He assume the appearance of an inanimate creature? Do you call it a lesser act of faith to acknowledge that Infant to be God, than to hold the substance of that Infant's body present under the accidents of a Host? I think any intellectual unbeliever, who rejects Christianity altogether, will tell you that the first act of faith is much the greater of the two.

Again, let us stand on Calvary. A human form is hanging on the Cross. Do you *really* believe that you see the Eternal God dying for the sins of the world—God *personally* dying in a human nature? Then turn once more to the Catholic altar, and witness the "elevation of the Host" —that part of the Mass which commemorates the "lifting up" of the divine Victim on the Cross. Does it require *less* faith, I ask, to adore the Crucified as God, than to acknowledge the body of your Crucified God now mystically immolated under the form of a Host? Our infidel

friend, who speaks from neutral ground, will tell you, I feel sure, that it requires a good deal more.

I am not denying that the Eucharistic Presence is a greater mystery of divine condescension, or more inscrutable in point of hiddenness, since the Humanity is concealed no less than the Divinity. But I contend that once you grasp the Incarnation with a realizing faith, you will say with me that, in comparison with *it*, Transubstantiation is scarcely to be called a mystery. It is their luminous faith in the Incarnation that makes Catholics so serenely at home with the Real Presence on their altars.

MOUNTAIN NUMBER THREE.

WHAT shall I call this mountain? I suppose the Confessional, since that is the popular name for the institution of which "Confession" is one part and "Absolution" another. As to which part *you* find the greater obstacle, O reader, I can not say. Some are more scandalized at the idea of confession, others at the doctrine of priestly absolution. It is certain, however, that the confession part of it has had more to do with bringing odium upon the institution as a whole.

But no matter about hard names, for the present. Let us come at once to the point.

I.—THE FACT

is the thing to be looked at, and from our old standpoint of common-sense. *As* a fact, it is no less remarkable than Transubstantiation, in its way. For the prac-

tice of confessing sins to a priest with a view to obtaining absolution is not confined to the Roman Catholic Church, but is found among those separated communions which agree with her in holding the Real Presence. And a goodly number of Anglicans, both in England and in America, have of late years adopted "auricular confession." I, for one, went to confession while an Anglican.

Well, we need but ask and answer two or three brief questions here.

1.—First, what is the particular *doctrine* with which we are dealing as a fact? Briefly this: that our Divine Redeemer instituted a Sacrament for the pardon of grave or "mortal" sins committed after baptism. It is called the Sacrament of Penance. In order to receive it, we must confess our sins, if able, and with proper dispositions, to a priest duly qualified to give us "absolution." In case we be unable to confess—as from a severe accident or illness,—we must have the will to do so.

2.—What is meant by "absolution"?

God's forgiveness. It is called absolution because it frees the soul from the bondage of sin.

3.—Who are required to receive this Sacrament of Penance? All baptized persons of sufficient age and instruction. But only the laity? No indeed. Every Catholic—layman, priest, bishop, and the Pope himself—is bound by the same law of receiving this Sacrament.

Now, what has common sense to say to the doctrine thus stated? It certainly does not begin by denying the institution of any such Sacrament; for that would be begging the question. Neither does it find any absurdity in the idea of manifesting sins to one who is authorized to grant God's forgiveness; for such a commission to pardon includes, of course, the lesser right of knowledge what to pardon. And, lastly, as to this claim of divine authorization which appears so incredible, nay monstrous, to some folk, it says there must be *some* ground for the claim, and a pretty strong ground too; or a practice so humiliating to self-love as confession undoubt-

edly is could never have obtained the acceptance which it has.

Yes, this is what plain common-sense has to say, instead of resorting to "billingsgate."

II.—The Word,

then, is the next inviting subject for our meditation; the text on which this doctrine is professedly based. You are probably familiar with it. St. John, xx, 23? Exactly. But let us read the two preceding verses as well. The Evangelist has just told us how our Saviour, on the very day of His Resurrection, came through closed doors to the Apostles, and greeted them with "Peace be to you," and showed them His hands and side (vv. 19, 20). Then he adds: "And again He said unto them: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. And having spoken these words, He breathed on them, and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (vv. 21–23).

Now, let private judgment try its hand, as before, at this anything but obscure passage.

1. —And first we will listen to traditional private judgment as I once heard it expounded by a clergyman who spoke for the so-called "Evangelical" section of the Church of England. He confined his remarks to verse 23—"Whose sins," etc., —not even quoting the preceding clause, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (a very significant omission, as we shall presently see); but went at his text with all the resolution of a man who takes the bull by the horns. His interpretation did not ascribe to the Apostles any gift or power greater than Christian ministers enjoy now, but explained the remission or retention of sins as the effect of the word of God on the conscience of the hearer. To "explain his explanation," he cited the Prayer-Book, where it exhorts any one who has difficulty in approaching the "Lord's Table" to come to some "discreet and learned minister of God's word, and open his grief," to the end that he may

"receive the benefit of absolution." He argued (and very justly) that the exhortation does not say "let him come to me, or to some other *priest*, and *confess his sins*"; but "let him come to me, or to some other *discreet and learned minister of God's word*, and *open his grief*"; whence it was evident that the term "absolution" meant only the unburdening of the person's conscience — the "removal of all scruple and doubtfulness," as it is added —by the suitable application of Scripture to his particular case.

If you, O reader, have hitherto sympathized with this ingenious rendering of our Saviour's words, your *own* private judgment must surely acknowledge that such is *not* their *obvious* meaning. It struck me at the time as about the best specimen of far-fetched or forced interpretation I had met with. However, it would be dishonest in me to deny that the good man made out his case, as to what was intended by the compilers of the Anglican "Book of Common Prayer," fully as well, to say the least, as the High-Church party make out theirs.

2.—Let us proceed, then, to exercise our own private judgment upon these important words of Christ. And we notice in verses 21 and 22 three things which bear upon verse 23.

(*a*) First, our Lord repeats the greeting "Peace be to you" by way of introduction to what follows. The salutation is new in His mouth. We do not meet with it till after the Resurrection. Can we doubt, then, that He uses it as a reminder that He has made peace between God and man by his now accomplished Passion and Death? Or, again, that He repeats it on the present occasion because He is about to commit to his Apostles a special "ministry of reconcilation"?

(*b*) In the next place, we notice that He adds immediately: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you:" words which can only mean that henceforth the Apostles are to act with His own divine authority—the very same authority He had received from His Father. Otherwise, what are the words doing here at all?

(*c*) Thirdly, He breathes upon the

Apostles, and says: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." That is, He gives them the Holy Spirit here and now, without waiting for Pentecost. Why? Certainly not to anticipate and render needless the plentitude of *that* outpouring; yet, as clearly, to qualify the Apostles for the work *now* committed to them—a divine work, therefore, and to be performed in the very person of the Holy Ghost.

It is to this last point I would particularly call your attention. Remember that Christ Himself, when "sent" by the Father at His baptism (St. Matthew, iii. 16, 17) was "anointed with the Holy Ghost," as St. Peter says (Acts x. 38); and in the "power" of the same Divine Spirit "went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil"—that is, not only as to their bodies, but, much more, as to their souls.

When His enemies accused Him of casting out devils by Beelzebub, He told them they were "blaspheming the Holy Ghost." And when He forgave sins, *it was not as God, but as the "Son of man,"*

and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Witness the instance recorded "for our learning" by St. Matthew (ix. 2–8) and St. Luke (v. 17–26). Reading both passages together, we find that our Lord, on a certain day, was seated teaching in "His own city" (Capharnaum, or Capernaum)—seated in the Synagogue, that is, —with a number of Pharisees and doctors of the Law seated near Him—men who had come "from all the towns of Galilee and of Judea, and from Jerusalem" (in order, of course, to "catch Him in His speech"). And St. Luke adds significantly that "the power of the Lord was there to heal them"—or "was working for their cure": the Holy Ghost, that is, was at work to heal their spiritual maladies.

While Christ is thus occupied in teaching, an appeal is made to Him for a bodily cure. A paralyzed man, lying on a bed, is brought to the door by importunate friends; and these, failing to make their way through the crowd, go up to the roof, and let the bed down through an opening,

till the sick man lies right in front of our Lord. Then the Master, to reward their faith, looks upon the poor paralytic, and says: "Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee"—seeming to ignore the object for which his friends had laid him there. Whereupon the Scribes and Pharisees began "to think and to say": "This man blasphemeth! Who can forgive sins but God only"?—showing that they understood our Saviour to have pronounced the man's pardon authoritatively.

Now, then, what is *His* answer? Does He say, "But I *am* God: therefore I forgive sins"? Not at all: not the slightest allusion to His own divinity; although, by reading their thoughts, He proves that God is with Him. "Why think ye evil in your hearts"? He asks. "Which is easier—to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk"? That is: "You would not accuse Me of blaspheming were I to restore this man to health at a word. Yet the power to do *that* can come from 'God only.' If then, I have this power from God, why not the power

to forgive sins?" Then he adds immediately: "But that ye may know that the *Son of man* hath power *on earth* to forgive sins [I say to this paralytic], Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." And the man arises, to the amazement of all present, and does as he is commanded. No wonder that "the people, when they saw it, feared, and praised God, who had given such power *unto men*."

Can we doubt *now*, honest reader, what our Lord meant when He said to His Apostles: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them"? Is it not plain that in giving them the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from Himself as well as from the Father, He conferred on them power and authority to act in the matter of forgiving sins as He Himself had acted? Surely your genuine private judgment must agree with mine on this question.

3.—And so, again, as to the added clause: "Whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Is it not equally clear

that the authority to withhold forgiveness is here bestowed? So that, in short, the power which Christ puts into the hands of His Apostles is a *judicial* power, to be exercised at discretion.

4.—And, lastly, common-sense wants to know how such power can be properly exercised at all without the manifestation, or confession, of sins. For sin is an interior act—an act of the will,—and depending on the conscience. To give or to refuse absolution at random—mere blind guess-work — would be absurd. Wherefore it stands to reason that the right of requiring confession of sins is included in the higher right of granting divine pardon. Is not this so, my honest friend?

III.—Word and Fact

are confronting us once more; each pointing to the other with unanswerable argument. Not only, as in the foregoing instances, is the Word responsible for the Fact, but the Fact is of such a nature in itself that nothing short of a divine

word could possibly have created it. For, whether we consider it as a matter of belief or as a matter of practice, it is equally unexplainable on any merely natural ground. Had the Word never been uttered—had our Lord never said to His Apostles: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained," — never could the claim of Apostolical Succession have carried with it belief in such a power. For, in spite of the unquestionable comfort which tender consciences and sincere penitents derive from faith in the "Tribunal of Penance," the self-love of the "natural man" is up in arms against it all the world over. And no less is this true of the clergy than of the laity. Great as a priest's consolation is at the good he is enabled to do in the confessional, yet the duty of hearing confessions, and the sense of responsibility accompanying it, make a far heavier burden for him than the obligation of going to confession can be to any of his people.

I say, then, not only has the Word created the Fact, but it could not possibly have done so had not such been the intention of Him who uttered the Word.

Supplementary.

Notwithstaning the verdict of common-sense above given, it is no wonder that "billingsgate" has been freely resorted to by opponents of the Sacrament of Penance. For not only is the natural man, as I have said, everywhere up in arms against this institution, but a personage known as the "father of lies" has a particular objection to it, because, forsooth, it rescues so many souls from his grip.

Well, as to "billingsgate," I presume, of course, that you, gentle reader, would scorn such a missile. You have, however, two or three little difficulties which you wish to see disposed of.

1.—You ask, and with perfect justice, if our confessional system be not open to grave abuse on the part of the clergy. Of course, everything good may be abused

in this bad world: is sure to be, indeed, more or less. But, in point of fact, the Church guards so carefully against abuses on the part of the priests in the Tribunal of Penance, and punishes them so rigorously, that their occurrence is extremely rare. If, instead of being ever on the watch for scandal, some people would take the trouble to inspect the laws of the Catholic Church regarding the confessional, they would be spared some humiliating mistakes—as, for instance, the notion that Catholics pay the priest for the pardon of their sins.

2.—But does not this Sacrament of Penance tend to encourage sin on the part of those who have recourse to it? You mean by the facility of obtaining pardon? Now, every Catholic who is sufficiently instructed to go to confession at all knows perfectly well that unless sincerely sorry for every "mortal" sin he cannot get absolution. The priest may pronounce the words over him, but they will have no effect. And sorrow means purpose of amendment, which includes the intention

of doing one's best to avoid for the future both the sin and the occasion of it. Consequently, my dear friend, Catholics who wish to continue on in sin are *the ones who do not go* to confession.

You have heard a good deal, no doubt, of infidelity in Catholic countries. Well, this infidelity is, for the most part, a very transparent sham. Young men, to begin with, but older ones too, determine to make free with certain of the Ten Commandments—those particularly which forbid sensuality and dishonesty. Accordingly they style themselves "liberals"; and the Church, which is so *il*liberal as to insist on said Commandments being kept, comes under the ban of their "enlightenment." You see, then, if the Tribunal of Penance only served to encourage sin, there would be none of this pretended unbelief.

3.—At all events, you may say, this having to go to confession seems to you a very hard law. You may even declare that *you* could never go, for the life of you. Why is it a law at all? Why not

left a matter of choice, as it is among the Anglican Ritualists?

Now, in the first place, all law is hard to those who are on the wrong side with regard to it. In other words, it is not the law but "the way of the transgressor" that is "hard." In the second place, the Church, in making it a law for everyone to go to confession, has acted like the wise and loving mother that she is. For were her children left free to go to confession or not, most of them would go to hell instead.

But is there really anything hard in having to go to confession? Either one has nothing particular to tell — nothing, at least, which causes shame in telling,— or the reverse is the case. If one has nothing difficult to tell, what is there "hard" about confessing? If the contrary be our case, then what is there hard in ridding ourselves of what is so painful, by simply mentioning it in the Sacred Tribunal with sincere sorrow and purpose of amendment?

Did you not object just now that the

Sacrament of Penance seems to encourage sin by the facility it holds out of obtaining pardon? There was much more *reason* in *that* argument. For it *is* an astonishing fact that our divine Lord has made it so *easy* to secure forgiveness. Reflect a moment on this fact.

(*a*) First, He has placed in the hands of the Church the infinite merits of His Passion and Death to be dispensed to the penitent; so that neither quality nor quantity of sin is beyond absolution, if only repented of.

(*b*) Secondly, He helps out our very sorrow by this Sacrament. For if our contrition be imperfect (and perfect contrition is far from easy to those who have sinned deeply, or for much length of time) — if we have only what is called "*at*trition," or the sorrow which comes from fear of the consequences of sin to the soul, — the grace of absolution takes up our imperfect sorrow and raises it to divine charity: the "sorrow of fear," that is, becomes the "sorrow of love."

(*c*) Thirdly, the penitent has not to con-

fess in public, but in strict privacy, and to one who is bound to lose his life rather than break the "seal" of confession.

(*d*) Fourthly, the penitent is free to choose a priest who is personally a stranger to him; and, in any case, must needs confess to one who is a poor sinner himself, and who knows that, but for the grace of God, he might, in his penitent's place, have done as bad or worse.

I ask, then, could our Blessed Saviour have shown more consideration for the feelings of penitents than He has shown in this Sacrament? Or, again, could He have instituted anything more demonstrative of His desire for our salvation?

Further questions might be asked and answered here, but the above suffice for my argument. The third "Mountain" has, I hope, been tunnelled to your satisfaction, O reader. But let me say a word more before passing to our fourth and last tunnel.

Pray for a right view of *sin*. The want of this right view is at the bottom of all

the indifference and unbelief of the day. If your conscience is properly sensitive to the presence of sin, you will welcome the Sacrament of Penance as a priceless blessing. And, then, it gives other graces beside absolution. It enlightens the conscience and strengthens the will; and, when duly frequented, secures final perseverance. No one will more gladly testify to the many benefits of this Sacrament than any sincere convert who makes faithful use of it after having been for years without it.

MOUNTAIN NUMBER FOUR.

THE POSITION OF OUR LADY IN THE RELIGION OF CATHOLICS.

The *cultus*, or worship, of the Virgin Mary, which forms an essential part of the Catholic system, is probably as great a rock of offence to your understanding, dear reader, as any of the mountains I have tunnelled for you. It was such to myself till I came to realize the meaning of the Incarnation. But we'll talk of that presently. Let us take once more our standpoint of common-sense, and from that serene eminence contemplate as a *fact* the belief in the Blessed Virgin's office as *our* Mother and our Advocate with Her Son.

I.—The Fact.

This belief is a parallel fact to the belief in Transubstantiation. Wherever you find one you find the other. You remember that, in treating of the Eucha-

ristic Presence, I appealed to the testimony of the still existing Nestorian and Eutychian Churches of the East, which separated from Catholic communion as early as the fifth century. A like appeal holds here. Both heresies bear witness to the antiquity of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, no less than to that of the doctrine of the Real Presence. This devotion is one of the things they have to-day in common with the Greek and Latin Churches; and were you, supposing it a "corruption" of some later age, to ask them how they came to borrow it, they would scornfully reply that they had never borrowed either this or anything else from Greeks or Latins: that the *cultus* in question was older than the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, having come, beyond all doubt, from the Apostles.

Now, this witness is the more remarkable in the case of Nestorianism, because that heresy asserted two persons in Christ (as well as two natures), and therefore denied to the Blessed Mary

her title "Mother of God." Indeed, Nestorius, while Patriarch of Constantinople, broached his heresy one Christmas morning by attacking this very title in a sermon. And, again, the first definition framed by the Council of Ephesus (A. D. 431), in condemnation of the heresy, was precisely the re-affirmation of the same incomparable title. So that, I say, had Nestorianism revenged itself by ignoring the Virgin Mary to the possible utmost, it would not have been at all surprising; whereas it only substituted in its liturgy "Christotokos" (Mother of Christ) for "Theotokos" (Mother of God), and continued to pay to the "Mother of Christ" an almost Catholic veneration—the inheritors of its tradition practising to this day the same filial recourse to Her which prevails among Greeks and Latins.

What has common-sense to say to this *fact?* Does it talk of idolatry and superstition having possession for centuries of the Latin, Greek and Oriental Churches? No; for common-sense abhors billings-

gate, once more. It says that a worship which has been for so many centuries the consolation of countless hearts, and is in itself both pure and purifying, is entitled at least to a respectful consideration. Is there anything absurd, it asks, in the *idea* that the Mother of our Lord and Saviour has a special power of intercession with Him in behalf of all for whose sake He became Her Son? Or, again, in the idea that She is Queen where He is King, so that Her ability to assist those who call upon Her is greater than we can understand? Common-sense finds nothing *absurd* here; on the contrary, it sees a very beautiful idea — as non-Catholic poets have testified, notably the pure-souled Longfellow. Common-sense, then, has to put a couple of questions, as before:— 1. When did this worship originate? 2. What is the authority for it?

1.—In answer to the first question, let us return to the fifth century.

(*a*) If the fact of the Nestorian Church holding the Real Presence is a strong argument that it took the doctrine with

it when it left the communion of the Greek and Latin Churches, equally strong and more so, if possible, is the inference that it *retained* its worship of the Blessed Virgin at the same separation after the Council of Ephesus. For, undoubtedly, the natural bent of a heresy which had robbed Mary of Her Divine Maternity would have been to make less and less of Her, and to progress in the opposite direction to anything like confidence in Her intercessory power, or personal love and devotion to Her. It could never have *developed a cultus* of the Virgin Mother. That stands to reason. We may ask, then, why did it retain this worship? Was it not because this devotion had become so deeply rooted in the hearts of the faithful before the rise of Nestorianism, that even those perverted by the heresy could not forsake their habit of recourse to Mary as the most powerful of all advocates with the Saviour? Either this or—what amounts to the same thing—because Nestorius and his partisans, while professing to

"reform" a point of faith, saw that it would never do to abandon so extremely popular a devotion. They might as well have given up the Mass and yet pretended to be "Apostolic."

(*b*) How deeply rooted, indeed, this worship really was in the hearts of the faithful at that period ought to be manifest from the uproar occasioned when Nestorius first attacked the term "Theotokos"; and, again, from the tumultuous joy which hailed the Ephesian anathema that confirmed to Our Lady Her peerless title forever more. A sentiment of mere reverence, however profound—such as High-Church Anglicans profess,*—would not have broken out so on either occasion. The excitement can only be accounted for on the supposition that the Mother of God was enthroned in the hearts of the Catholic peoples as an object of personal love and devotion—even as She is now. So, too, with respect to the language

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* Dr. Pusey wrote a post-*Eirenicon*, on "The Reverence Due to the Ever-Blessed Theotokos."

used at Ephesus by St. Cyril of Alexandria, who presided by the Pope's orders. This great Father addresses the Blessed Virgin in a strain of sublime panegyric, which no honest mind will attempt to explain away as so much empty rhetoric; and which would have been worse than nonsense had the object of it not been regarded as holding that place in the Kingdom of Her Son which the Greek and Latin Churches assign to Her to-day.

(*c*) Now, it has been said—and by men professing to hold the right doctrine on the Incarnation — that the Council of Ephesus made a mistake (or, at least, did something to be regretted) when it defined the term "Theotokos" as an article of faith; for that this definition gave rise, more than anything else could have done, to the subsequent worship of the Virgin. If such writers mean that the Council coined the term "Theotokos," they betray ignorance of fact; for, beyond all question, Nestorius attacked the term as a *popular* expression of faith and devotion, which must therefore have been

handed down catechetically for a considerable time previous. They are perfectly right, however, in judging that such a title, once become a popular expression, would inevitably lead to the worship they deplore. And in this they show a keener insight, if not into the value of a theological term, at least into human nature, than the late Dr. Pusey, who could contend that "Theotokos" was a word of Apostolic origin, yet imagine that the cult of the Blessed Virgin began at a very late date.*

(*d*) With regard, then, to the question *when* this worship began, I think your private judgment must agree with mine, dear reader, that, at any rate, it must have been before the fifth century. Can we get any nearer the date?

Well, reflect that here, as in the case of the Real Presence, had it been an innovation upon Apostolic doctrine, this worship would have been a heresy. Had the Apostles taught, as Protestants fancy

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* University Sermon "On the Rule of Faith."

they did, that the Virgin Mother was barely to be mentioned in the Creed, and, except that, put completely out of sight, their successors, the ever-watchful Fathers of the Church, would have instantly denounced any attempt to make more of Her, and have branded as a diabolical illusion the belief that She is our Mother and our Advocate with Her Son, and able to help all who call upon Her. Do we meet with any such denunciations during the first four centuries? Not once. On the contrary, St. Gregory of Nazianzum, whom both East and West honor for his learning, testifies in the fourth century* that St. Justina, the martyr, when assailed by the spells of the magician Cyprian (afterwards himself a martyr), "suppliantly besought the Virgin Mary that She would succor a virgin in danger.†

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* Newman tells us, in his "Essay on Development," that St. Gregory makes a mistake in supposing St. Justina to have suffered in the preceding century. *Note to third edition.*

† Τὴν Παρθένον Μαρίαν ἱκετεύουσα βοηθῆσαι παρθένῳ κινδυνευούσῃ. Orat. xviii. n. 19. Apud Perrone, Prælect. Theologicæ, *De Invocatione Sanctorum.*

And does the holy Doctor exclaim indignantly, "What a monstrous novelty"! or "What superstition"! or "Who ever heard of the like before"?—and so on? Not at all. He commend's Justina's act by the way he mentions it, just as a Catholic writer now would do; and evidently regards the devotion she shows as quite a matter of course. Then, too, in witness for the third century, we have the hymns and prayers of St. Ephrem of Edessa, a light of the Syrian Church, which speak the most glowing devotion to the Blessed Virgin. They have probably been added to by copyists; but that they are genuine in the main is the constant tradition of the Syrian Church, and the judgment of the learned Assemani, the most eminent theologian of that Church to-day.

Again, the "Commemoration" of the Blessed Virgin in the Apostolic liturgies which have come down to us is quite enough to show that the Apostles themselves taught the Churches to call Mary "Our Lady," and "Ever-Virgin," and

"Mother of God," and to rely upon Her intercession at the head of all the saints. I shall never forget the conviction on this point brought home to myself while an Anglican by the perusal of the late Dr. Neale's "Five Primitive Liturgies." Four of these liturgies are of Apostolic authorship, and are still in use with very little alteration. That of St. Thomas, having fallen into Nestorian hands, has suffered change, as I said above, in the substitution of "Christo-tokos" for "Theo-tokos," but retains "our glorious and blessed *Lady*," etc

And, once more, the Roman Catacombs bear irrefragable witness to the confidence of the first Christians in the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, by an early representation of Her *as standing between SS. Peter and Paul, and holding up Her hands in an attitude of prayer*. There is no mistaking whom the three figures are meant for; for the name of each person is written overhead. There is also a rudely-drawn Madonna and Child—the Virgin Mother with Her hands raised

in prayer, while the Divine Infant is seated on her lap; and this has ever been, both in the East and in the West, the traditional symbol of Her maternal mediation.

(*e*) As brevity is an object with me, I must now pass on; referring my reader for fuller information to Dr. Melia's work, "The Virgin Mary," to Cardinal Newman's "Letter to Dr. Pusey," and to Father Ryder's "Catholic Controversy." From the few plain facts I have indicated here, it ought to be clear to genuine private judgment that the claim which is made by the Latin, Greek and Oriental Churches alike, regarding the origin of the *cultus* of the Virgin Mary *can not be refuted.* They claim that it came from the Apostles. On the one hand, it is impossible to show that it did not; on the other hand, it is equally impossible to account for it satisfactorily unless it did.

2.—So now for our answer to the other question put by common-sense: What is the authority for this worship?

We might say this question is already answered. If a doctrine came from the Apostles, is not that enough? For a Catholic, yes; because *we* believe in Apostolic Tradition as the *Un*written Word of God. We do not find that Christ said to His Church, "Go, and *write*," but "Go, and *teach*." And while we accept what the Apostles did write as inspired by the Holy Ghost, we know that the Written Word of the New Testament is far from containing *all* that they taught. We believe that the "Spirit of Truth" watches over the Unwritten Word no less than over the Written, and takes care that the *living voice* of the Church shall deliver it to us unerringly from age to age. But I suppose my non-Catholic reader, when he asks for authority, to mean Scripture. And the plan of this "Short Cut" is precisely an appeal to the logic of *fact* and *word*. Moreover, it is some word of Christ Himself that has been appealed to in the foregoing chapters. Is there, then, any such word to be brought forward here? We shall see.

II.—The Word.

Our Saviour says but little, in the Gospel record, either to or about His Blessed Mother; and that little may well have appeared to my reader as designed rather to guard against than to encourage the honors He foresaw would be paid to Her. Such, I know, was my own view once,—a view absolutely impossible to one who understands the official position of Mary in the Kingdom of Her Son. So plain, indeed, is this position to all who have eyes to see, that there is no need of any word of Christ to authorize our confident recourse to Her whose maternal relation to us is included in Her maternal relation to Him. Nevertheless a word there is, to which we may and do appeal, and to which our Saviour (as I shall show) can not but have meant us to appeal.

It is one of the Seven Words from the Cross,—words uttered in the most solemn hour the world has ever seen,—words for all future time to hear. It consists of a double sentence: the first part addressed to the Blessed Virgin—"Woman, behold

Thy son"; the other to St. John, Apostle and Evangelist—"Behold thy Mother"! (St. John, xix., 26, 27.)

Now, what has private judgment to say to this Word? Traditional private judgment, in the name of Protestantism, discovers here only a lesson in filial piety. There is *that*, undoubtedly; but will your private judgment and mine, taking the standpoint of common-sense and insisting on the right of criticism, be satisfied with such an interpretation? I think not. We have a *why* or two to ask— an awkward monosyllable for the religious notions of some folks.

1.—Why did our Saviour, if He meant nothing more than to provide His widowed Mother with a home and a guardian, select that time of all others for the purpose? Why did He not wait till after His Resurrection, and then arrange the matter privately? If He was God (which is our faith), He knew, of course, that, in centuries to come, innumerable believers would flock in spirit to Calvary, and hang upon His Seven Words there, and find in

this Third Word (to His mother and St. John) unspeakable comfort and the strongest of all grounds for their confidence in the Blessed Virgin as their Advocate with His Heart. He knew, I say, all this; yet not an act, not a hint, do we read of afterwards to show that such an understanding on our part would be a gross and perilous error. Is it too much to say, then, that He is responsible for this understanding of His Third Word from the Cross?

2.—But, secondly, why was the Blessed Virgin there? What was She doing at the foot of the Cross at all? A perfectly fair question, and by no means flippant. For, if, in accordance with the Protestant idea, the Virgin Mary was simply chosen to be instrumental in bringing the Saviour into the world, and afterwards to minister to His childhood, it is quite proper to ask why She lived on the earth any longer than Her services were needed. At any rate, why did She not depart in peace along with Her spouse St. Joseph, and before our Lord's public life began, with its destined termination in the Passion? Why

was She reserved to witness that Passion, and, consequently, to sorrow and suffer intensely, when She might have been so easily spared all this? Would it not have been a far greater act of "filial piety" on Her Son's part to send Her quietly to Her rest, than to allow Her to come and stand by His Cross, and there find Her a guardian?

These are questions, gentle reader, which, if you are a Protestant, you have never asked yourself, I'm sure. If you had, you could have found no satisfactory answer but that which the Catholic Church gives. And what is it? That as Jesus is the "Second Adam," so is Mary the *Second Eve*.

Note the parallel.

(*a*) To Eve came an angel of darkness with a proposal of disobedience to God's will; and she, by freely consenting thereto, became the mother of our death—through Adam, "in whom all die." To Mary came an angel of light, with a proposal of obedience to God's will; and She, by Her equally free consent, be-

came the Mother of our life—through Jesus Christ, "in whom all are made alive."

(*b*) Eve, again, is called the "mother of all living"—that is as regards the *natural* life. No less, then, is Mary the "Mother of all living, as regards the *super*natural or spiritual life.

(*c*) Once more, it was said to Eve: "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." And since the Redemption, or "new creation," was to be effected by suffering (according to the divine decree), the New Eve had to suffer along with the New Adam—Her sorrows to be united with His Passion—that so She also might "in sorrow bring forth children," becoming the Mother of the redeemed at the very foot of the Cross.

This, then, is why She was there. Her rightful place, as Second Eve, was beside the Tree of Life on which the Second Adam died for the world's salvation. It was part of Her vocation to unite with Him there in crushing the serpent's head. And, I ask, does not this Catholic expla-

nation commend itself to unprejudiced private judgment as at once logical and simple?

3.—But, thirdly, why was St. John there? Had not all the Apostles forsaken their Master and fled on seeing Him deliver Himself up to His enemies? It is easy to say that St. John, having been allowed, because "known to the high-priest," to pass unmolested through the earlier scenes of the Passion, would naturally (unless prevented) follow his beloved Lord to Calvary, and remain as near to Him as he could to the last. Still, must we not admit that he was there by a special providence—that our Saviour took care to have him there? And can we deny that *the* reason for this was that the Apostolate might be represented there, and in it the nascent Church—and represented the more perfectly by *one?* If you argue that the Apostolate was only the Teaching Church, remember that the Apostles were all *disciples* too—a disciple being a *learner*,—just as the bishops of the Church to-day are no less learners from her, their mother,

than their youngest brethren whom they teach in her name; so that St. John both could and did represent in its unity the entire body of the faithful—in a word, the Church of all time.

In the light, then, of these considerations, will genuine private judgment maintain that we have no warrant for believing ourselves included in the person of St. John on this occasion? And which interpretation is the more reasonable from the standpoint of common-sense—to see in the words "Behold Thy son! Behold thy Mother!" nothing more than a private domestic arrangement; or to hear the New Adam pointing out to the New Eve the promised offspring of her sorrows — His mystical body the Church, which She must therefore cherish as Himself; at the same time bidding this mystical body acknowledge His Mother for its own?

4.—There is no question that our Lord, on this occasion, *did* choose St. John as the one Apostle with whom His Mother was to have a home for the rest of Her mortal life. For St. John himself says:

"From that hour the disciple took Her to his own." And tradition tells us that, when the same Apostle came to live at Ephesus, the Blessed Virgin resided there several years under his care. We only contend that this was but a part—and that the least part—of our Saviour's meaning when He spoke the Third Word from the Cross.

But, now, how passing strange it is that professing Christians are found who fail to see anything significant in this very choice of St. John! Did not our Lord place His Mother with the one Apostle He Himself loved best? St. John is privileged to call himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He it was who leant on the breast of his Lord at supper. I say, then, that in singling out St. John for His Mother's guardian, our Saviour gave a signal proof, in the first place, how dear She was to His own Sacred Heart; and an equally plain indication, in the second place, that He wished Her to be loved and honored next to Himself — as His best gift after Him-

self; for St. John could not fail so to love and honor Her.

And, further, is it nothing that He placed Her with an Apostle, and not with some lay disciple? He might have confided Her to the care of Her "sister," Mary of Cleophas, or to Joseph of Arimathea, for instance. But He did not. He placed Her with an Apostle; that is, with the Teaching Church, not with the Lay Church. I say did this signify nothing? Was it not giving Her the position of honor most fitting for one whom He bequeathed to the entire Church as its Mother? Yes, and it was more than this; it was putting Her, in a certain true sense, into His own place with the Apostles, making Her their Lady as well as their Mother. For reflect how they must have regarded Her, with their now perfect faith in Her Son's Divinity. He who had proved His Godhead by raising Himself from the dead, had been, they knew, conceived and born of this ever-virgin Mother. She was, therefore, God's human Mother —the one creature chosen by Him and

fitted to become His Mother. What an object of deepest veneration—exalted, by Her relation to God, above all creatures, however glorious! And when the illumination of Pentecost came, how must their love and worship have increased for Her who was the very Spouse of the Holy Ghost, and had carried within Her inviolate womb the Word made Flesh conceived from Him!

Then, again, how was it possible for them, after their dear Lord's Ascension, not to see His face in seeing Hers, nor to hear His voice in hearing Hers? So that a tender personal love for Her must have been the inevitable result of His leaving Her with them, and especially with the right to call Her their own Mother. As *His* Mother, She was their Lady and Queen, because He was their Lord and King; but as *their* Mother—as the Church's Mother, left to watch over its early years as She had watched over His—She was one to converse with, one to come to for counsel, for encouragement, and especially for intercession.

5.—I repeat, especially for intercession. For this was another reason why our Lord left Her with the Church a while. It was not Her vocation to teach; though, undoubtedly, the Apostles, before separating for their several mission fields, learned from Her the particulars of the Incarnation (of which She was the only human witness, remember), as also much of the history of the Sacred Infancy, and of the long Hidden Life at Nazareth. How many of their Lord's unrecorded words must they not have cherished in their hearts after conversations with Her! But, beyond this, it was not Her vocation to teach. Her office was to pray. There is an apostleship of prayer no less than an apostleship of preaching. And those who were called to go forth and preach relied on the prayers of the lay element in the Church, as well as on their own and on one another's. This is plain from St. Paul's exhortations to the faithful to help him with their prayers.

Now, obviously, the prayers of Her through whom alone the Redeemer had

come—of Her who had freely consented to His Incarnation—of Her who had ministered to Him so faithfully, with no thought but for His interests and intentions—of Her who had ever "heard His word and kept it"—of Her who had generously given Him up to die, and accepted Her own martyrdom of sorrow—of Her who had stood by His Cross and offered Him up to His Father—of Her who had not refused to remain on earth after His Ascension into Heaven—obviously the prayers of this Queen of Saints, so "full of grace" and of merit, must have had a power with God which the Apostles knew how to value. Consequently, must they not have taken care to commend themselves and their labors to Mary's intercession, and have taught their converts to place a like reliance on it?

6.—Yes, their converts; in whom, whether Jews or Gentiles, the story of the Incarnation could not fail to excite a special interest concerning the Virgin Mother. The Jew would glory in Her as of his nation, and point triumphantly

to the prophecy of Isaias—quoted by St. Matthew (i., 23), who wrote his Gospel for the Jews: "Behold a Virgin [or, more properly, *the* Virgin] shall conceive and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel—God with us." The Gentile, in turn, would readily perceive the fulfillment of a promise as old as the human race,—a promise which had originated the many traditions of a Virgin giving birth to a God. Both Jew and Gentile, then, would make much inquiry regarding this Virgin Mother; and, during the fifteen years (as the tradition is) of Her sojourn with the Church on earth, would wish eagerly to see and speak with Her. On learning, therefore, that She constantly prayed for them—that Her dying Son had commended them from the Cross to Her as Her children—must not these primitive Christians have conceived a great desire for the prayers of such a Mother in all kinds of necessities? And especially when battling with temptations, and after lapses into sin, would they not hope in Her intercession as the surest hold they had upon the grace and mercy of Her Son?

7.—But our Divine Redeemer had a further motive still in placing His Mother with the Apostolate. It was in order to let woman see and appreciate the new sphere opened to her by the Gospel dispensation, and that she had more than regained through the second Eve the dignity she had lost through the first. For Mary, as at once mother and virgin, typified not only the Christian mother, destined to take so important a part in helping the Church with the propagation of religion, but, still more, the consecrated virgin, called to lead a life of prayer and charity in closer association with the work of the Teaching Church. And need I suggest to my reader the reverent affection and grateful homage with which Christian womanhood would at once regard that "blessed" One to whom, under God, it owed its exaltation? "Blessed art Thou amongst women"! had said the Angel of the Annunciation. "Blessed art Thou amongst women"! had echoed St. Elizabeth, "filled with the Holy Ghost." "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts that gave Thee

suck''! had exclaimed the devout woman from the crowd. So that Mary's own prediction—"Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call Me blessed''—was certain of fulfillment by her own sex especially—by those, that is, who should belong to the true faith. Is it too much to say, then, that wherever the Apostles preached, a positive devotion to the Virgin Mother would infallibly spring up among Her daughters from their very sense of indebtedness to Her, as well as from the glory of Her Divine Maternity, and because of the office assigned Her by the Third Word from the Cross? Surely not, since human nature was then was it is now.

8.—And, lastly, if this positive devotion could not fail, unless checked by authority (and where is a jot of evidence that it was checked?), to take root among the faithful, more particularly of Her own sex, even while the Blessed Virgin was still on earth, what must have been the result when the Apostles told the Churches of Her glorious Assumption

into Heaven? (For that the Assumption *is* an Apostolic tradition is the only reasonable explanation of it as the unquestioning belief of East and West.*) Their doctrine of the "Communion of Saints," which led, as we know from Catacomb testimony, to the invocation of the martyrs, would at once console the faithful for the loss of their Lady's earthly presence, by the assurance that She could now know all their wants through the medium of the Beatific Vision, while Her power to aid them was immeasurably greater because She was reigning with Her Son.

We see, then, how easily the *cultus* of the Blessed Virgin, which bursts into light in the fifth century, can be traced to the very foot of the Cross. And if you ask me why it does not come to the front sooner, the explanation is simple. After the honor of our Lord in the Blessed

* The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is not yet defined as an article of faith; but that it is *definable* I consider proved. The best essay I ever read on the subject was in the *Dublin Review* some years ago,—"The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin an Apostolic Tradition."

Sacrament, there is nothing which the Catholic heart of to-day is so sensitive about as the honor of His Immaculate Mother. So it was from the first. And, therefore, on account of the prevailing goddess-worship, with its grossly sensual rites, and the insults to which the Queen of Virgins would have been exposed if made known to the heathen as an object of Christian devotion, She was no less jealously guarded by the "discipline of the secret" than was Her Divine Son in the Eucharist.

III.—The Fact and the Word.

I consider our Fourth Mountain tunnelled, my friend, on the same plan as the preceding ones. First, taking for our Fact the belief in the Blessed Virgin as our mother and advocate, we find this belief by no means a late growth in the history of Christianity, but traceable to so early a period that it is impossible to account for it adequately except by admitting that it came from the Apostles. Next, we take for our Word one of the Seven uttered

from the Cross. This Word, spoken when and where it was, is shown to be not only *capable* of creating the above Fact, but *certain* to create it, unless afterwards authoritatively explained to the contrary. Whereas, then, no such explanation is forthcoming, either from our Lord Himself or from His Apostles, we conclude that the Word was *meant* to create the Fact.

Supplementary.

Now to deal with certain "difficulties" which once were my own, and which my non-Catholic reader may bring up. I have said that they ceased to be difficulties to myself as soon as I came to realize the meaning of the Incarnation. Let me first explain, then, why this was so.

The Incarnation means that God, in the Second Person of the Undivided Trinity, *has a Mother*. He did not come into the world by forming a body from the earth — as He had done for Adam,— and breathing into it a soul, and then assuming both body and soul into personal union with Himself. No: He came into

the world "made of a woman," as St. Paul says—His Divine Person conceived and born in human nature of a virgin mother. Once, therefore, the Son of Mary, He is always the Son of Mary; and She, once the Mother of God, is always the Mother of God.

I say that as soon as I came to know this Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation—instead of the hazy, half-Nestorian notion in which I had been reared—I saw that no words of our Lord in the Gospel could possibly be intended to deny or set aside His Mother's dignity and the honor due to Her, any more than to deny or set aside His own Divinity.

So now let us look at these formidable difficulties.

1.—First, there are the words of our Saviour to His Mother and St. Joseph together, when they found Him in the Temple after the three days' loss (St. Luke, ii. 49). The Blessed Virgin has just said: "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." And He answers: "How

is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

This passage is chosen by the Catholic Church as the Gospel for her feast of the Blessed Virgin's "Maternity" (*i. e.* Divine Maternity). And the choice is a very happy one; for Mary addresses as son Him who replies by speaking of His Eternal Father. God the Father, then, and the Virgin Mother have a Son in common since the Incarnation. Now, is our Lord's answer intended to ignore this relationship? Not for a moment. For whether we understand Him to reproach His "parents" gently for not remembering that, if He left them for a while, or whatever else He might do, it must be in the interests of His Heavenly Father,—or again, that He is eager to begin, though so young, the preaching of the Gospel, for which He has just proved His competency,—we see Him, as a comment on His own words, go down to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph, and become "subject to them": *that* being, in turn, "His

Father's business, or He would not have done it.

What wonder, then, if Catholics find here not only a lesson and example of what is called "voluntary obedience" (the fundamental virtue of the "religious" state), but also a striking indication of the importance attached by our Lord to what is called "devotion" to His Mother and St. Joseph, and of the place of honor they were to occupy in His Kingdom, the Church?

2.—The next and chief "difficulty" arises from our Saviour's answer to His Mother at the marriage-feast of Cana (St. John, ii. 4). My objector will quote, of course, the rude-sounding Protestant reading, "Woman, what have I to do with thee"?—citing it as though our Lord had not added, "Mine hour is not yet come"; and, still more, as though He had not wrought the miracle.

(*a*) Now, first, with regard to the word "woman"—which is also the reading of Catholic versions, taken from the Vulgate's "*mulier*,"—it is well known that

the Evangelist's original "*gunai*" represents a term of respect, and even of endearment, in use among both Greeks and Orientals. Perhaps my reader can recall it, with me, in the *Œdipus Rex* of Sophocles, or in Xenophon's *Cyropœdeia*. It was the term by which mother or wife, even if a queen, was addressed in public, and corresponded to our "lady" or "madam." To be sure, our Lord spoke in Syriac, and the word He used had probably a deeper signification than the ordinary conventional term (as we shall presently see); but, whatever He meant, it can not have been anything incompatible with the *honor* He showed His Blessed Mother by actually doing what She had merely hinted at.

(*b*) Next, for your "What have I to do with thee?" Just as the English word "woman" sounds harsh and rude in comparison with the Oriental "lady" or "madam," so does the phrase "What have I to do with thee?" when contrasted with the *literal* translation of the original τί ἐστὶν ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ;—"What is there to me and to thee?"

Our Douay version adopts this literal translation, and wisely; because it is difficult to determine exactly what the divine Speaker meant. The common Catholic interpretation of His entire answer is a simple one; viz., "What part have *we* in this affair? My time for working miracles and beginning my public career has not yet come." And, certainly, it can not be proved that this was not His meaning for "Mine hour is not yet come"; since there is good reason for supposing—as, for instance, St. Chrysostom and Theophylact* supposed,—that He had intended Jerusalem to be the scene of His first miracle.

But if, instead of the literal rendering, "What is there to me and to thee?" one more idiomatic be insisted on, Archbishop Kenrick's "What hast thou to do with me"? is better, I think, than "What have I to do with thee"? for it will mean, "What hast thou with me in asking this miracle at my hands"? But "What have we with each other"? "What have

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* See Cornelius à Lapide, *Comment. in loco.*

we in common''? are perfectly idiomatic renderings, and, in accordance with the above interpretation of "Mine hour is not yet come," will mean, "What have we with each other [or in common] *with regard to this matter''?* That is, "You are not in my counsels here. Your charity would have me supply the wine miraculously, whereas I am reserving my first miracle for the beginning of my public ministry."

Now, if this be the true interpretation of "What is there to me and to thee? Mine hour is not yet come," the fact that our Lord wrought the miracle forthwith makes us ask in surprise *why* He did it. And there is but one answer to be had; to-wit, that He *changed his plans* as to where He should enter upon His public career, *because His Mother's charity had merely hinted a wish to Him.* What wonder, then, if Catholics see in this incident an argument of the strongest kind for confident recourse to the Blessed Virgin?

(*c*) But the words "Mine hour is not yet come" may signify something very different. In my belief they do. I hold, with

St. Augustine, that our Saviour means the "hour" of His Passion. For I find this same Evangelist, St. John (vii. 30), saying that Christ's enemies were unable to lay hands on Him, because "*His hour* was not yet come"; and again recording certain words of our Lord in obvious reference to His Passion (xii., 27), "And what shall I say? Father, save me from this *hour*"*?* and, once more, on the very eve of His Passion, "Father, the *hour* is come" (xvii. 1). Assuredly that "hour" was ever present to His mind. And had He not a special remembrancer of it in the marriage-feast at Cana? Did He not *know*, when He went to the feast, that He *would* change water into wine there, and that "this beginning of miracles" would typify the changing of wine into His Blood when His own espousals with the Church should come? Moreover, must not His Mother's presence at the scene of joy have brought before Him vividly the future scene of woe, when She would be standing beside His Cross, as Second Eve, and become the Mother of His Church?

From this point of view, then (which I have little doubt is the true one), we behold a deeper meaning in the words "Woman, what have we with each other [*now*]? Mine hour is not yet come." He calls her "Woman" here because He will call Her so on Calvary; using (as the author of "Eutropia" tells us*) the Syriac word *Ayesha*—the very word, he says, by which Adam called Eve,—and under the form of a question gently gives Her to understand (what She will not fail to "keep and ponder in Her heart") that from *now*, and through the course of the public career upon which He is just entering, *their relationship as mother and son must be as though it were not*—even until the hour of His Passion shall arrive, when She will take Her appointed place as Second Eve beside His Cross; and whereas She has just played the part of advocate with Him, in behalf of the bridal couple, She is not to have *that office* in His Kingdom

* Father Pius Devine, C. P.

until He shall Himself install Her in it by a special word from the Cross. All this may well have been conveyed to Her in the few words of His answer. At the same time He works the miracle She hints at, to show that Her appeal to His divine power has been made by His own fore-ordering; and, again, to let *us* see, for our priceless consolation, that *Her prayer will never be refused*.

Whichever view, therefore, we Catholics take of this remarkable passage in the story of the marriage-feast, we find it anything but a "difficulty" to our faith. On the contrary, we derive from it precious encouragement to confidence in the Blessed Virgin as our advocate with Her Son.

3.—Now for the two remaining objections derived from our Lord's words.

(*a*) A woman from the crowd He has been preaching to exclaims: "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts that gave Thee suck"! But He replies: "Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it" (St. Luke, xi., 27, 28).

(*b*) He is preaching in a certain house, when word is brought to Him, "Thy Mother and Thy brethren are without, desiring to speak with Thee." And He answers, addressing His audience: "Who is My mother and who are My brethren"? Then, stretching out His hand towards His disciples, "Behold My mother and My brethren! For whoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother."

"Can I deny," you urge, "that He fairly *ignores* His Mother on these two conspicuous occasions"?

Well, having just given it as my opinion that our Saviour informed His Mother at the marriage-feast that their relationship *must be as though it were not* during the time of His public ministry, I point again to that answer at Cana as the key to your puzzle here. The only question is, *Why* did Jesus act thus? And the reason is very plain. He had to teach a certain lesson to His Apostles and other disciples, as also to the Church after them

—the lesson of *detachment from family ties*. Having, then, this virtue to teach, He began by practising it Himself. He required His Apostles to leave father and mother, brother and sister, even wife and children, for His sake; so He set them the example by leaving Her who was dearest to Him after His Heavenly Father.

In this sense only did He "ignore" His Blessed Mother. And not a word does He say, in either of the passages you cite, to lessen the veneration due to Her. On the contrary, in the first passage He implies unmistakably that She is more blessed for the perfection with which She has "heard the word of God and kept it," than even for having borne Him in Her womb and suckled Him at Her breasts; for which reason the Catholic Church selects this very passage for one of her liturgical Gospels in Our Lady's honor.

I must now pass to difficulties of another kind. There is a beautiful book I read some years ago, called "Mary in the Gospels," by Dr. Spencer Northcote, one of the distinguished clerical converts

from Anglicanism. Let me refer you to that work for the complete removal of any prejudice you may still retain as to what the Gospels say or do not say concerning the Blessed Virgin. I will make but one remark in passing with regard to their supposed *silence*.

I remember myself once asking the stupid question, "Why is so *little* said about the Virgin Mary in the Gospels"? Oh, the blindness of self-styled "Gospel" Christians! Is not the Blessed Virgin a prominent figure in the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity at Bethlehem, the Epiphany, the Presentation in the Temple, the Flight into Egypt, the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple, and the long Hidden Life at Nazareth? And do we not see Her at our Lord's side when He works His first miracle at Her request, and again when He hangs upon the Cross? Now, considering that two out of the four Gospels do not touch upon our Saviour's early years at all, while the other two devote to the subject but a couple of chapters apiece (the main pur-

pose with all the Evangelists being to deal with His public career up to His death on Calvary), what more, I ask, could we reasonably expect to have told us about the Blessed Virgin? We have abundance, as it is, to feed contemplation and create a whole system of devotion.

Again, if the Gospels make no mention of Her after the Resurrection, how much do they tell us, pray, of our Saviour's Risen Life and Ascension? St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke give but one chapter each to His "forty days" on earth; St. John gives only two. St. Matthew and St. John, again, say nothing of the Ascension, while St. Mark and St. Luke barely mention it. The latter supplies the full account in the first chapter of Acts; but there also we learn (verse 14) that the Apostles, after the Ascension, "continued with one mind in prayer, with the women, and *with Mary the Mother of Jesus*." So that the Blessed Virgin, you see, is left by the sacred narrative *with the Apostles*, and waiting the day of Pentecost.

(CONCLUSION.)

And now for two or three little "difficulties" of another kind, as I said. Let us follow our usual plan.

1.—About the "invocation" of the Blessed Virgin. How can She possibly hear and attend to the prayers and necessities of a single earthly client, much less, therefore, to the numerous petitions She must be receiving from all parts of the world, and so many of them at once?

I have already given a sufficient explanation, but here will be more explicit.

(*a*) The "invocation of saints" is a part of the Unwritten Word of God, or Apostolical Tradition. It completes the doctrine of Holy Scripture, that the servants of God in heaven *do* intercede for their brethren on earth.

(*b*) *How* the Blessed Virgin and the saints know the prayers and wants of those who call upon them is a mystery, if you will. It is part of the Communion of Saints, as I said before—which, of course, is a matter of *faith*. But the explanation given by Catholic theologians

ought to satisfy an intelligent mind; viz., that those who enjoy the Vision of God (which is called the Beatific Vision) see and know all things "in the mirror of the Trinity"—that is, in *God's* seeing and knowing; because they see His essence, and His knowledge is one thing with that.

(*c*) The Blessed Virgin, as Mother of God, is Queen of Heaven and earth, and consequently has more power to assist Her clients that we can understand in this life. The Angels, for instance, are all at Her service. But the happy experience of Her help, so readily granted to all who sincerely ask it, is quite enough for us Catholics, without any explanation as to the *how* of it.

2.—But how is it right, you say, to *worship* the Blessed Virgin at all? Is it not giving Her *divine* honor?

(*a*) "Worship" simply means honor, though applied nowadays to religious honor only. Now, religious honor is not necessarily *divine*. To God alone—and therefore to Jesus Christ, who is equally

God in both natures — is due *supreme* worship, or *adoration*, especially in the form of *sacrifice*. But to the saints who are reigning with Christ, as glorified members of His Mystical Body, is due a *religious* honor in proportion to the dignity of each — therefore especially to His Virgin Mother.

(*b*) Again the worship of prayer and praise is not *divine* honor in *kind*. It becomes so in *degree* when offered to God; and it is impossible for any one who knows the difference, the infinite distance, between God and a creature, to offer to a creature the *degree* of this worship which belongs to the Creator. The only *divine* honor in *kind* is the worship of sacrifice. Now, the Catholic Church has a Sacrifice, as you know; and this Sacrifice, the Mass, is never offered to the Blessed Virgin or the saints. It is offered, indeed, *in their honor*, to obtain the benefit of their intercession; but *to* God alone, that *He* may grant us that benefit.

(*c*) Neither do we pray to Our Lady and the saints as *sources*, but as *channels*,

of grace. Now, *we* can be channels of grace to one another hear on earth, and we ask one another's prayers for that reason.

3.—But does not our doctrine of the *mediation* of the Blessed Virgin and the saints interfere with the one mediatorship of Christ?

By no means. For our Lord is the "one Mediator" of *salvation;* and it is *through His merits* the Blessed Virgin and the saints obtain for us whatever they do obtain. They pray either to Himself or to the Father in His name, just as we do here on earth. And, again, to His merits alone are we indebted for having these "mediators of *intercession.*"

4.—But has not our worship of the Virgin Mary developed into a system full of danger to the illiterate multitude, if not to the general run of Catholics? Has She not *taken Her Son's place* as an object of hope and confidence in the faith of the great majority of our people?

My dear friend, if this were so it would be all over with the Catholic religion.

(*a*) First, then, our devotion to the Blessed Virgin *has* developed with the course of centuries, but *ever following a parallel development of devotion to our Lord Himself*—especially with regard to His Sacred Humanity and Its Real Presence on our altars.

(*b*) Secondly, no Catholic, however illiterate, who has learned the first principles of his religion, can possibly put the Blessed Virgin into the place of Jesus Christ as the object of his faith and hope. *She would be nothing at all to us but for what Her Divine Son is.* It is because She is *His* Mother that we value having Her for ours. With and through Her we have a hold on Him, particularly on His mercy, which we should not have without Her; and He, in turn, has a hold on us through Her. For, being our Judge as well as our Saviour, He has made Her intercession a beautiful excuse for pardoning us again and again when His justice cries out for our condemnation.

(*c*) Thirdly, the Catholic Church does not *require* us under pain of sin or censure

to pray to the Blessed Virgin at all. She merely exhorts us to do so as one of the surest means to salvation. Whereas she does insist on our hearing Mass and receiving the Sacraments according to her regulations; thereby putting us in direct communication with Jesus Christ our God, our Saviour, and our Judge, and the *end* of all our devotions.

Are you satisfied, dear reader? Or would you not like to ask a question about the Immaculate Conception, and another regarding our belief in apparitions of the Blessed Virgin and Her "miraculous" shrines? I should, if in your place. For I confess to having been utterly at sea on the subject of the Immaculate Conception but a short time before my submission to the Church; while as to apparitions and miraculous shrines, I supposed such things winked at by ecclesiastical authorities as harmless superstitions.

1.—The term "immaculate" conception means conception "without stain of original sin." The doctrine is simply this: that the Blessed Virgin was *preserved* in

the first moment of Her existence—the moment when God created the soul and infused it into the body—from contracting the stain of original sin which She would otherwise have derived from Adam. And *how* was She thus preserved? By the grace of a *preventive redemption*—the foreseen merits of Her Redeemer being applied to Her soul at that instant. The doctrine, therefore, does *not* mean that She had no need of redemption, but that She was redeemed in a more perfect manner than we are, who have our Saviour's merits applied to us in Baptism.

And *why* was She thus redeemed? Because, in the divine plan, She was chosen Second Eve, through whom the Second Adam should come to us; so that She had to be created *on an equality with* the First Eve—that is, in "original justice," and not in original sin.

But how do we know that She was thus "conceived without stain"? From divine revelation, as the definition declares. The Catholic Church finds the doctrine in both parts of God's Word—

in Scripture and in Apostolical Tradition; and therefore Pius IX., of glorious memory, was able to define it as an article of faith. For nothing can be defined as an article of faith which is not contained in one, at least, of these two parts of God's Word.

Of course, we Catholics rejoice exceedingly in the absolute sinlessness of the Mother of God—

"Our tainted nature's solitary boast,"

as the Protestant poet Wordsworth could say. And we hail Her as the champion of our own fallen nature against the infernal Serpent.

2.—With regard to apparitions of the Blessed Virgin. That they *have* occurred, and *may* occur at any time, is beyond all doubt to the Catholic mind. But each alleged instance is, of course, a question of evidence; and we prudently await the decision of the ecclesiastical authorities before making sure that it has occurred. Now, whereas ecclesiastical authority is proverbially slow and cautious in accepting evi-

dence on these matters, and subjects it to a severe scrutiny, the result is we have a more reasonable certainty when we assent to that authority's decision than we ordinarily have in any secular matter which depends on human testimony.

Take, for instance, the most celebrated apparition of the Blessed Virgin in this century—the apparition, or rather series of apparitions, made to the peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, at Lourdes in the Pyrenees. Read the book called "Our Lady of Lourdes,"* by Monsieur Henri Lasserre; and I defy your honest private judgment to form any other conclusion than that the Blessed Virgin *did* appear to the child, and that God attested the truth of the apparition by the new stream of water which suddenly came from the grotto, and began working miraculous cures—a phenomenon that continues to this day. Those who obstinately refuse

* "Notre Dame de Lourdes," a singularly beautiful work. It has been translated from the French by more hands than one. It is to be had from The "AVE MARIA" Office.

to believe wherever the supernatural is attested, stultify their reason and are undeserving of argument.

So, again, in the case of "miraculous shrines"—that is, shrines or sanctuaries where there is some famous statue or picture of the Virgin and Child, or of the Virgin alone, which goes by the name of Our Lady of—this or that. These Madonnas have become famous from time-honored *experience* that those who come to pray before them are wont to obtain, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, signal favors from Almighty God. I refer you to Dr. Spencer Northcote's "Celebrated Sanctuaries of the Madonna" for abundant proofs of what I here declare a fact.

And now what has common-sense to say to all this? I think it bids us remember that "God's ways are not as our ways," and that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." I think it also wants to know why our divine Lord should *not* honor His Blessed Mother by causing Her to appear on earth at certain times and places, with

messages of comfort or of warning, for the revival of fervor among the lax, or for the confusion of unbelief. Who shall dare to say that He can not, if He please? Who shall presume to call it unworthy of Him to do so? He has certainly shown His wisdom in sending His Blessed Mother to Lourdes, where a splendid sanctuary invites the believer to approach the holy Sacraments before trying the miraculous water, and where that water itself continues to refute the naturalism, materialism and scepticism of the age. And whenever He may choose to grant special favors, whether spiritual or temporal, to earnest seekers who, from faith in His Mother's intercession, come devoutly to ask it at Her sanctuaries or shrines, what is this but a part of the "economy" whereby He uses the material and the visible as means of conveying grace? *He* is responsible for the belief of Catholics in the power of His Immaculate Mother. *He* has given Her the place She holds in His kingdom, the Catholic Church. And it is for His own greater glory that He thus glorifies Her.

And now, patient reader, I must bid you farewell. If you wish complete instruction in the Catholic religion, as I hope you do, put yourself in the hands of a priest who can give you the necessary time. If you wish to inform yourself first, get a very cheap work called "Catholic Belief"—the best thing of its kind ever published. I have mentioned other books above.

But, before all things, *pray*. Beg of Him in whom we both believe as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," first to show you what *He* wishes you to believe, and next to give you grace to do *His* will, not your own. There is nothing so dangerous to a soul as wanting to follow *its own will* in questions of faith or morals. God grant that before long you may join with me in thanking Him every day of your life for having made you a Catholic! And when you are one, don't forget to pray for your humble servant in Christ, who has been instrumental in showing you a "Short Cut to the True Church," and in tunnelling Four Mountains of difficulty for you, by the logic of Fact and Word.

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